

Miracles of the Church



Eucharistic Miracle Lanciano, 700AD , still preserved until today

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The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, Italy



In the city of Lanciano, *Italy*, around the year 700 of Our Lord there was a priest of the order of St. Basil who, though learned in the sciences of the world, was ignorant in ways of God, and was not strong in his faith. He was plagued by a doubt as to whether the consecrated Host was truly the Body of Christ, and the consecrated wine truly His Blood. He had difficulty believing in the mystery of transubstantiation (the miraculous changing of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ).



One morning, as he was celebrating Mass, he had already said the most holy words of consecration ("*This is My Body... This is my Blood...*"), as Jesus had taught it to his Apostles, his doubts and errors weighed upon him more heavily than ever. By a most singular and marvelous grace, he saw the Bread changed into Flesh and the wine into Blood.

Frightened and confused by such a great and stupendous Miracle, he

stood quite a while as if in a divine ecstasy; but eventually, his fear gave way to the spiritual happiness that filled his soul, and he turned his joyful yet tearful face to those around him, exclaiming "...*Behold the Flesh and the blood of our Most Beloved Christ.*"

At those words, the bystanders ran to the altar and began, with tears, to cry for mercy. The faithful, who, having become witnesses themselves, spread the news throughout the entire city.



Today twelve centuries after the miraculous occurrence it remains intact, a sustained miracle! Upon a superficial examination, the Host of Flesh, which is still in one piece and has retained the dimensions of the original "Large Host", has a fibrous appearance and a brown color, which becomes light-reddish if one places a light in the back of the Ostensorium.

The blood, contained in the chalice, has an earthly color, inclined toward the yellow of ocher, and consists of five coagulated globules. Each of the parts is uneven in shape and size, and when weighed together, the total weight is equal to that of each piece.

The actual spot of the miracle is located beneath the present day tabernacle of the Church of St. Francis. The Miracle Itself is preserved in the second tabernacle, which is found in the high altar. The Host, now changed to Flesh, is contained in a silver Monstrance. The wine, now changed to Blood, is contained in a crystal chalice.

Official Position of the Catholic Church

Local Church and Vatican official have authenticated the Eucharistic miracle on many occasions since the middle ages. In 1672, Pope Clement X declared the altar of the Eucharistic Miracle a privileged altar on all Mondays of the year. In 1887, the Archbishop of Lanciano obtained from Pope Leo XIII a plenary indulgence in perpetuity to those who visit the Church of the Miracle during the eight days preceding the annual feast day, which falls on the last Sunday in October.

Scientific Studies

A rigorous scientific analysis was performed in 1970-71 by Professor Dr. Odorardo, University Professor in anatomy and pathological histology and in chemistry and clinical microscopy, Head Physician of the United Hospitals of Arezzo. Prof. Linoli was assisted by Prof. Dr. Ruggero Bertelli, a Professor Emeritus of anatomy at the University of Siena.

The research done on the fragments of the Blood and the Flesh yielded the following results:

- The Blood of the Eucharistic Miracle is real blood and the Flesh is real flesh.
- The Flesh consists of the muscular tissue of the myocardium (heart wall).
- The Blood and the Flesh belong to the human species.
- The blood type is identical in the Blood and in the Flesh, type AB.
- The proteins in the blood are in the same proportions as those found in normal fresh blood.
- There is no trace whatsoever of any materials or agents used for preservation of flesh or blood.

Science, when called to testify, has confirmed what we have believed in Faith and what the Catholic Church has taught for the last 2,000 years; echoing the words of Christ, "*My Flesh is real food; my Blood real drink. Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood dwells continually in Me and I dwell in him.*"-John 6:56-57



Miracles of the Eucharist
Throughout the World

Reunion Island, Indian Ocean (Property of France)--1905

Fr. Lacombe, a priest at St. Andrew's Catholic Church exposed the Blessed Sacrament for 40 hours devotion. During the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in which Our Lord remained exposed in the Monstrance, Fr. Lacombe looked up to behold the face of Christ in Agony exposed in the Monstrance. Fearing what he was seeing was an optical illusion, he said nothing, but could not banish the image from his thoughts. After Mass, a man asked Father to bless a medal. Wanting to see if the image of Christ in the Host was an illusion, Father sent the man to look at the Host in the Monstrance. The man hurried back, crying that he has seen the face of a Man in the Monstrance. The altar boys, who Fr. Lacombe had sent to view the Host in the Monstrance, returned in amazement with the same reports. A little girl, who also beheld the face, later said, "I cannot forget what I have seen, I will always remember the Face of Our Lord... it has made an indelible mark on my life." Word of the miracle of the Holy Face of Christ spread quickly across the island. People flocked to the Church to see the Face of Christ in the Monstrance.

Around 2:00 p.m. the image of Christ in the Host changed to that of a crucifix, the Host remaining Immaculate. Crowds gathered to adore Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and as they were singing "Tantum Ergo" the image of the Crucifix disappeared. The Bishop ordered the Miraculous Host preserved. Although later attempts were made to discredit the Miracle and Fr. Lacombe, so many eyewitnesses were present that any such efforts were fruitless.

Faverney, Burgundy, France--Pentecost Sunday 1608 (Notre Dame de la Blanche)

It was a glorious feast of the town, and Dom Garnier had erected an especially magnificent repository for the Blessed Sacrament. At 3:00 a.m. of the feast, Dom Garnier returned to the Church and saw a glow around the chapel in which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. Fearing the Church was on fire, he ran to the nearby Benedictine monastery for help. Accompanied by several monks, they returned to the Church and opened the door to witness a miracle. The Monstrance was suspended in mid-air! The stone, which was previously underneath the Monstrance, lay in three fragments on the floor, surrounded by the broken remains of the altar and candles. The Monks, who had fallen away in belief and practice, fell to their knees in adoration of the Sacred Host, Who they recognized

as their Lord and Savior. This miracle inspired many conversions of those who had fallen away from Jesus and was declared valid by the Bishop within a few months.

Bawol, Poland 1264

It was a very turbulent and trying time in Poland's history, with many people falling victim to the dreaded Black Plague that stalked Europe. The population was depleted, and religious standards changed after the loss of older churchmen. People were devastated by the loss of family and friends, and the overall outlook was hopeless.

It was in these trying times that a strange phenomenon arose from the marshy swamps near the village of Bawol, Poland. Nobody knew what to make of the arresting rays of light and the lightning bolts that ran across the sky. After the strange lights were first seen, people began visiting the spot to see who or what was causing the amazing light that nightly lit up the sky.

During this miraculous occurrence, news reached Bawol that someone had broken into a church in Krakow and stolen the pyx containing the Most Holy Eucharist. The bishop entreated the people to pray and fast for the safe return of the Sacred Host, but was fearful that the thief had desecrated the Real Presence of Jesus.

Hearing of the mysterious lights emanating from the swamp, the Bishop led a procession to the site. The people dug into the marsh and found the pyx, which contained the Blessed Sacrament, perfectly preserved amidst the slime and filth of the swamp. After the Sacred Host was restored to the Krakow church, the mysterious lights stopped. King Casimir the Great had the swamp drained and erected a magnificent church, which he dedicated as Corpus Christi, the Body of Christ.

Aninon, Spain, 1300

The church was obliterated by fire, and upon first inspection, it appeared that everything was destroyed--even the tabernacle and main altar. But the pall and corporal that covered the Sacred Hosts in the tabernacle were only burned in a few places. Five of the Hosts were bleeding and one of the Hosts was fixed to the pall. The people constructed a new church to honor the miraculous Hosts. People flocked to the grand new church to adore the miracle of the Eucharist. Even after the first miracle, the Bishop saw fresh blood soaking the corporal, which also continued to emit a divine fragrance. Both the pall and corporal have remained intact throughout the years with no sign of decay. On November 23, 1613 the

Vicar General of Tarazona approved the miracle.

Viversel, Belgium, Abbey of Herkenrode, 1317

A priest of the parish went to administer last rites to a dying parishioner. While hearing the dying person's confession, the priest left his kit, which contained holy oils and the Blessed Sacrament, unattended outside the patient's room. Another villager, aware that the priest was occupied, snuck into the house and began rustling through the priest's kit. He lifted out the pyx containing the Sacred Hosts, but when he took Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament out, the Sacred Hosts immediately started bleeding. Fearing that God would strike him down for such an act, the villager fled from the scene.

Having finished hearing the confession of the dying patient, the priest went to fetch his kit, so as to give Holy Communion for the last time. Upon opening the Kit, he discovered the bloodied Hosts, and ran to consult with the pastor. They gave the bleeding Hosts to Fr. Simon, an abbot. While the priest was carrying the miraculous treasure to the abbey, voices of angels were heard, as well as the shrieking of demons. Animals in the fields bowed their heads in homage to the Eucharistic King. Before Mass at the abbey, the Sacred Hosts were placed on the altar. At this time, monks present witnessed the face of Christ, crowned with thorns, and they all testified to having seen the same vision. There have been many accounts of divine intervention and supernatural occurrences following this miracle.

Santarem, Portugal, mid-13th century

A woman of Santarem, upset by the perceived infidelity of her husband, desperately sought the counsel of a sorceress. In exchange for a consecrated Host, the sorceress promised to restore the affections of the woman's wayward husband. Although the woman was distressed by her marital situation, she realized that such an action was dreadfully wrong, and a sacrilege against the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist. Despite her trepidation, the woman went to Mass and received, but did not consume, the Sacred Host. After hurrying from the church, she placed the Most Blessed Sacrament in her kerchief. Intent on her mission, the woman did not notice that the Host had started to bleed profusely. Another villager worried that the woman herself was injured, and drew the blood to her attention. Horrified that the Host was bleeding, she rushed home and placed the Blessed Sacrament in a trunk. In the middle of the night, the woman and her husband were awakened by the rays of bright light emanating from the trunk. Other townspeople came to the house and also beheld the miracle. The parish priest brought the miraculous Host back to the church in a wax container and placed it in the

tabernacle. This was not the end of the miracle of Santarem, however: when the priest again opened the tabernacle, the wax container was broken, and instead a crystal container held the Blood of the Host! The church which contained the Sacred Host has been re-named the Church of the Miracle.

Pezilla-La-Riviere, France--1793

During the violence and anti-Catholic furor of the French Revolution several brave French citizens took the Blessed Sacrament from their Church and kept the Real Presence of Jesus in their homes. The French government was enforcing a ban against Catholicism at the time, and even sold Churches and their sacred contents! Aware that their church was about to be sold, Rosa Llorens and Jean Bonafos went in and retrieved the Sacred Hosts from the tabernacle. If they had been caught, death would have been nearly certain. Despite the obvious danger, Rosa welcomed fellow brave Catholics who wished to adore Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. The persecution of Catholics increased rapidly during the Reign of Terror, and many of the faithful suffered great losses of home and even life. Amidst this mayhem and persecution, the homes of Rosa Llorens and Jean Bonafos miraculously escaped unscathed, protected by the Divine Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Erding, Bavaria (Present day Germany)--1417

A poor farmer of Erding had no food for his family, no matter how much time and effort he put into working his fields. A fellow farmer, who was quite successful, told him that the secret to his success was having the Blessed Sacrament in his home. The poor farmer, knowing nothing about proper veneration or respect of the Sacred Eucharist, viewed it merely in terms of possessing a charm that could bring good fortune. At Mass on Holy Thursday he went to Communion but did not consume the Sacred Host, and instead removed it from his mouth and placed it in a cloth. Although the farmer was not at all aware of the serious sin he was committing, he experienced a great deal of fear at the thought of his action. He deliberated, and asked himself about the consequences of what he had done. He honestly believed that the Presence of the Sacred Host in his home would cause the fortune of his family to change for the better. Nonetheless, he was plagued by a feeling that his actions were dreadfully wrong. His conscience finally won the battle inside of him, and he turned to go back from the Church and to confess his sin. As he was turning, the Sacred Host fell from his hand, floated in the air, and landed on the ground. The farmer began to search desperately for the Blessed Sacrament but could not find any trace of it. After his search, the farmer hurried back to the Church and immediately told the priest what had transpired. Accompanied by many villagers, they went back to the scene

of the miracle. While still quite a ways away the priest could see the Eucharist, shining white, on the ground. When the priest bent to pick up the Host, it again flew into the air, was suspended and fell to the ground and disappeared. The priest relayed news of this event to the Bishop who went himself to the site. He, too, bent to retrieve the Sacred Host from the ground, but it again flew into the air and was suspended for an extended period of time, then floated to the ground. After this third and final miracle adoration and veneration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament increased dramatically and the people were awestruck by the miracle they had witnessed. To make reparation for the sins against our Eucharistic Lord, people of the town erected a beautiful Church.

Avignon, France--1433

The Sorgue river in Avignon, France was heavily flooded in November of 1433. The waters rose steadily and reached a dangerous height. Along the teeming Sorgue, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed perpetually in a little church. The Gray Penitents of the Franciscan order were certain that the little church had been destroyed by the raging waters. Fearing that the Blessed Sacrament would be destroyed as well, two friars rowed to the Church. To their astonishment, although water around the church was 4 feet high, a pathway from the entrance to the altar was perfectly dry! Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, our sovereign King, was unscathed! The pathway from the entrance to the altar called to mind the parting of the Red Sea in Moses' time, for all along the sides of the Church, water steadily rose. Despite the surrounding flood, the pathway remained completely dry, untouched by even a drop of water. Amazed by what they were seeing, the Friars had others from their order come to the Church to verify the miracle. On that day our Eucharistic Lord was victorious over the raging water.

Turin, Italy--1453

Turin was besieged by the armies of Piedmont, and soldiers ransacked and pillaged throughout the city-state. A Church in the village of Exilles was plundered by one of these soldiers, and he grabbed everything he could cram into his sack. One of the things he stole was a monstrance, with the Sacred Host still inside. The soldier threw the sack, which also contained the monstrance, onto his donkey. The man became enraged when the sack kept falling off the donkey's back, and began to furiously beat the animal. By this time, they were surrounded by villagers, who were distressed by the soldier's actions. All of a sudden, the sack fell to the ground, and its contents were strewn about the ground. The monstrance caught the attention of all who were present, and it slowly rose into the air, suspended ten feet above the ground. A priest was among the crowd, and hastened to find the bishop. The bishop

immediately returned to the site of the miracle, accompanied by many priests. Upon the bishop's arrival, the monstrance opened and fell to the ground, leaving the Sacred Host still aloft and surrounded by a radiant light. The bishop began chanting Latin hymns, and was joined by the townspeople. During the hymns, the Host slowly descended, and landed in the outstretched chalice held by the bishop. People from all over Italy and Europe began coming immediately to venerate the Miracle of Turin.

Eucharistic Miracles--Saints

St. Catherine of Siena was invited to drink the Precious Blood of Jesus, which flowed from His side. After drinking from the Fountain of His Precious Blood, she could not eat or drink anything more. For seven years before her death she lived on no food but Our Lord in the Eucharist. She was not hungry, but remained active and strong.

St. Juliana Falconieri, foundress of the Servite nuns, fasted so rigorously throughout her life that she was unable to even receive Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament on her death bed. She begged the priest to bring the Eucharist near, so that she could at least be next to Jesus. When he brought the Lord to her, St. Juliana wanted to kiss Him, but the priest would not allow her to. She then asked for a corporal (holy cloth) to be placed on her chest, over her heart, so that Jesus could be placed there for a moment. The priest agreed. As soon as the Sacred Host was laid on her chest, Our Lord in the Eucharist disappeared! And St. Juliana, having been united with her Love, died--her face radiant with joy. The priests and sisters fell to their knees at this miracle. When the Sisters later prepared her body for burial, they found on her breast--where Jesus had been placed--an outline of the Crucified Christ, encircled by the Host.

St. Catherine of Genoa was a daily communicant, a special grace at the time in which she lived. During Advent and Lent she lived without food. She was sustained by the Eucharist and salt water alone.

Eucharistic Miracle

Lanciano, Italy 8th Century A.D.



Ancient Anxanum, the city of the Frentanese, has contained for over twelve centuries the first and greatest Eucharistic Miracle of the Catholic Church. This wondrous Event took place in the 8th century A.D. in the little Church of St. Legontian, as a divine response to a Basilian monk's doubt about Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist.

During Holy Mass, after the two-fold consecration, the host was changed into live Flesh and the wine was changed into live Blood, which coagulated into five globules, irregular and differing in shape and size.

The Host-Flesh, as can be very distinctly observed today, has the same dimensions as the large host used today in the Latin church; it is light brown and appears rose-colored when lighted from the back.

The Blood is coagulated and has an earthy color resembling the yellow of ochre.

Various ecclesiastical investigation ("Recognitions") were conducted since 1574.

In 1970-'71 and taken up again partly in 1981 there took place a scientific investigation by the most illustrious scientist Prof. Odoardo Linoli, eminent

Professor in Anatomy and Pathological Histology and in Chemistry and Clinical Microscopy. He was assisted by Prof. Ruggero Bertelli of the University of Siena.

The analyses were conducted with absolute and unquestionable scientific precision and they were documented with a series of microscopic photographs.

These analyses sustained the following conclusions:

- The Flesh is real Flesh. The Blood is real Blood.
- The Flesh and the Blood belong to the human species.
- The Flesh consists of the muscular tissue of the heart.
- In the Flesh we see present in section: the myocardium, the endocardium, the vagus nerve and also the left ventricle of the heart for the large thickness of the myocardium.
- The Flesh is a "HEART" complete in its essential structure.
- The Flesh and the Blood have the same blood-type: AB (Blood-type identical to that which Prof. Baima Bollone uncovered in the Holy Shroud of Turin).
- In the Blood there were found proteins in the same normal proportions (percentage-wise) as are found in the sero-proteic make-up of the fresh normal blood.
- In the Blood there were also found these minerals: chlorides, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, sodium and calcium.
- The preservation of the Flesh and of the Blood, which were left in their natural state for twelve centuries and exposed to the action of atmospheric and biological agents, remains an extraordinary phenomenon.



Fig. 1 - Eosine x 200. Overall histological aspect of a Flesh sample with fibers collected in bundles with longitudinal orientation as it occurs in the outer surface layers of the heart.



Fig. 2 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 250. An artery and, very close, a branch of the vagal nerve.

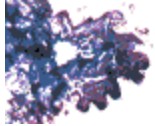


Fig. 3 - Miracle Heart in Lanciano. Mallory x 400. Evidence of the "Rough" aspect of the endocardium; the syncytoid structure of the myocardial tissue

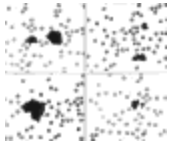


Fig. 4 - Elution-absorption test x 80. Above: Hemagglutination test on blood sample in Lanciano: on the left, anti A serum used; on the right, anti-B serum. Below: hemoagglutination test on a Flesh sample in Lanciano: left, with anti-A serum, right, with anti-B serum. It appears thus that the Flesh and the Blood in Lanciano belong to AB blood group.

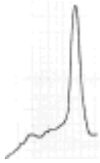


Fig. 5 - Electro-phoretic pattern of Blood proteins (Cromoscan photometer). The profile of serum fractions is normal and superimposable to that of a fresh serum sample.

In conclusion, it may be said that Science, when called upon to testify, has given a certain and thorough response as regards the authenticity of the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano.

Lanciano, 700's A.D.:
The Heart of Christ

Lanciano is a small, medieval town, nestled in from the coast of the Adriatic Sea in Italy, halfway between San Giovanni Rotondo and Loreto. Everything about Lanciano smacks of the Eucharistic Miracle. Even the name of the town was changed from Anxanum (in ancient times) to Lanciano, mean-ing "The Lance". Tradition has it that the centurion Longinus, who thrust the Lance into the side of Jesus, striking Him in the Tip of His Heart from which He shed blood and water, (in the Gospel account of the Crucifixion (Mk 15: 29)) was from this town. After seeing the events which followed the piercing of Jesus' heart, the darkening of the sun, and the earthquake, he believed that Christ was the Savior. A more physical sign, however, was that Longinus had had poor eyesight, and after having touched his eyes with the water and blood from the side of

Jesus, his eyesight was restored. What a perfect parallel the actions of the Centurion were to the Eucharistic Miracle. He touched the Heart of Jesus, was healed, and converted. He gave up the Army, went to Cappadocia, and was martyred for the faith. He is known now as Saint Longinus. His feast day is celebrated on March 15.



The church of the Eucharistic Miracle is located in the center of the town. But what is the center of the town today was the outskirts of the town back in the Eighth Century, when the Eucharistic Miracle occurred. At the time, it was called the Church of St. Legontian and St. Domitian, and was under the custody of the Basilian Monks of the Greek Orthodox Rite. This was prior to the Great Schism of 1054.

A Basilian monk, wise in the ways of the world, but not in the ways of faith, was having a trying time with his belief in the real presence of Our Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. He prayed constantly for relief from his doubts, and from the fear that he was losing his vocation. He suffered through the routine of his priesthood day after day, with these doubts gnawing at him.

The situation in the world did not help strengthen his faith. There were many heresies cropping up all the time, which kept chipping away at his faith. They were not all from outside the church either. Brother priests and bishops were victims of these heresies, and they were being spread throughout the church. This priest couldn't seem to help being more and more convinced by the logic of these

heresies, especially the one concerning his particular problem, the physical presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

One morning, while he was having a strong attack of doubt, he began the Consecration of the Mass for the people of the town. He used the same size host which is used in the Latin Rite masses today. What he beheld as he consecrated the bread and wine caused his hands to shake, indeed his whole body. He stood for a long time with his back to the people, and then slowly turned around to them.



He said; "O fortunate witnesses to whom the Blessed God, to confound my disbelief, has wished to reveal Himself in this Most Blessed Sacrament and to render Himself visible to our eyes.

Come, brethren, and marvel at our God so close to us. Behold the Flesh and Blood of our most beloved Christ." The host had turned into Flesh. The wine had turned into Blood.

The people, having witnessed the miracle for themselves, began to wail, asking for forgiveness, crying for mercy. Others began beating their breasts, confessing their sins, declaring themselves unworthy to witness such a miracle. Still others went down on their knees in respect, and thanksgiving for the gift the Lord had bestowed on them. All spread the story throughout the town and surrounding villages.

Jesus even allowed Himself to be crucified again. After the miracle, the Host was pinned down to a wooden board, so that when it dried, it would not curl up, as scabbed flesh does. So here He was again, with nails in His Body, nailed to a piece of wood.

The miracle that occurred in 700 was just the beginning. That was 1250 years ago. Had that miracle taken place, and then the flesh and blood disintegrated, as would have been normal, the miracle would have been none the less a miracle. The priest's faith had been renewed. The entire town, the whole country for that matter, became aware of the miracle. Pilgrims flocked to Lanciano to venerate the Host turned flesh. Belief in the Eucharist had been reborn.

The gift from the Lord was complete.



But that's not all. The miracle is ongoing. The Host-turned-Flesh, and the wine-turned-Blood, without the use of any form of preservative, is still present in the reliquary. In 1574 testing was done on the Flesh and Blood and an unexplainable phenomenon was discovered. The five pellets of coagulated Blood are different sizes and shapes. But any combination weighs the same as the total. In other words, 1 weighs the same as 2, 2 weigh the same as 3, and 3 weigh the same as 5.

From the very beginning, the local church accepted this miracle as a true sign from heaven, and venerated the Eucharistic Flesh and Blood in processions on its feast day, the last Sunday of October. The fame of the shrine spread throughout the region quickly, and soon all of Italy came to the Church in Pilgrimage.

Many accounts authenticating the Eucharistic Miracle have been written over the years. Because this has been such an important local miracle, the background and history of the events were carefully recorded.

There had been a manuscript written in both Greek and Latin, attesting to the miracle. It was said to have been written and certified at the time of the miracle. In a Chronology of the City of Lanciano historian Fella wrote that in early 1500 two Basilian Monks came to the Church, which was now in the custody of the Franciscans, and asked to stay overnight. They also asked to see the parchment which told the story of the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano. The Franciscans allowed them to study the parchment overnight. But the next morning, the Basilian Monks left very early, before the Franciscans had awakened, and took the manuscripts with them. The motive, it was thought, was that the Basilian Monks were ashamed that one of their own had lost his faith in the

Eucharist, and hoped that by stealing the original document attesting to the event, it might go away. The Church of the miracle remained in the custody of the Monks of St Basil, until 1176, when the Benedictines took over. However, the building had become very run down, and the Benedictines were not overly excited about taking care of it. The Franciscans, however, did want custodianship of the Shrine. When one of their benefactors, Bishop Landulfo, was made Bishop of Chieti, he gave them the Shrine to take care of.

So, in 1252, the Benedictines left, and the Franciscans took over. What they were not aware of until they actually came to Lanciano was that the church was a disaster. They surmised that this was why the Benedictines so easily turned it over to them. In 1258, the Franciscans built anew church on the site of the original Church of St Legontian.

In 1515, Pope Leo X made Lanciano an episcopal See, directly responsible to Rome. In 1562, Pope Pius IV wrote a Papal Bull raising it to an Archepiscopal See.

In 1666, the Franciscans found themselves in the middle of a legal battle with what was called the "Raccomandati", or Select group of the town. Today's Italians might call them "I Superbi". They thought they were better than everyone else. The Raccomandati tried to take the church away from the Franciscans by laying claim to the original church of St. Legontian, upon which the Franciscan church was built. If they had won, they would have had both churches. But the Lord intervened through the high ranking Cardinal Giannetti, of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious, and the Franciscans won the case. You can be sure that they immediately applied for a deed, and 18 years later, in 1684, it was granted them. During Napoleon's time, in 1809, the Franciscans were driven out of the town. But they returned in solemn triumph on June 21, 1953.

On June 25, 1672, Pope Clement X declared the altar of the Eucharistic Miracle a privileged altar on the Octave day of the deceased and on all Mondays of the year. In 1887, the Archbishop of Lanciano, Monsignore Petarca, obtained from Pope Leo XIII, a plenary indulgence in perpetuity to those who venerate the Eucharistic Miracle during the 8 days preceding the feast day.

The Eucharistic Miracle was placed in different locations within the Church of St Francis over the years. At one point, in 1566, the threat of the Turks became imminent along the Adriatic Coast. It was thought that Lanciano

would be an easy target for them. As a matter of security, the Eucharistic Miracle was taken from its chapel and walled up on the other side of the Church. It got to a point, however, that the threat of the Turks became too much of a reality. On August 1 of that year, a Friar Giovanni Antonio di Mastro Renzo lost his faith, not in the Eucharist, but either in God's ability or God's desire to save him and his little band of Franciscans from the onslaught of the Turks. Using the need to save the Eucharistic Miracle from the Infidels, he took the reliquary containing the Flesh and Blood, and with his Friars fled the city. They walked all through the night. Just before dawn, Friar Giovanni felt they had put enough distance between them and the enemy, and ordered his friars to rest. As the sun came up, they found that they were back at the gates of the city.

Believing that the Lord had intervened, and that He wanted His Sacred Sign as an assurance to the people of the city of Lanciano that He had not abandoned them, the friars were filled with the Holy Spirit. They acquired the courage of lions. They vowed to remain in the Church, and protect the Eucharistic Miracle with their lives. As it turned out, the Lord kept them from harm, as well as the city of Lanciano, and the Eucharistic Miracle.

The Flesh and Blood were kept walled up until 1636, although the threat of the invading Turks had long since disappeared. At that time, the Eucharistic Miracle was transferred to the right side of the altar, encased in an iron tabernacle, behind iron doors. There were four keys to the vault, each held by different people in the town. This was called the Valsecca Chapel, in honor of the benefactor. The Miraculous Flesh and Blood were kept in this chapel until 1902. The faithful were only able to venerate the Eucharistic Miracle on special occasions, the Monday after Easter, and the last week in October, the week of the feast. The Plenary Indulgence was available to the people during the feast.

By 1902, it was determined that the Valsecca Chapel was inadequate for the Eucharistic Miracle. The people of Lanciano were hungry to be able to see Our Lord Jesus in the form of Flesh and Blood while they prayed to Him. Under the inspiration of the local bishop of Lanciano, Bishop Petrarca, a beautiful altar and new home for the Eucharistic Miracle was designed by a well known architect, Filippo Sergiacomo. That was a beautiful sign. But the real sign came from the people of Lanciano.

They collected all the money needed for the new altar. During the month of the feast, five bishops from the

Abruzzi region, with the Franciscans, and pilgrims from all over, solemnly dedicated the new altar.

Lanciano was selected as the site for the First Eucharistic Congress for the region of Abruzzi on September 23-25, 1921.

We bring our pilgrim to this shrine many times each year. Upon entering the church, our attention is immediately focused on the unusual altar. There are two tabernacles, rather than the traditional one. The second tabernacle is on top of the first. Continuing down the aisle toward the main altar, we see a large tablet on the wall, dating back to 1574, which tells the story of the Eucharistic Miracle.

Further on the right of the main altar, is a painting of the Eucharistic Miracle. The painting opens out from the wall, revealing a set of doors, behind which is hidden an old iron tabernacle. This is the Valsecca Chapel, and was the home of the Eucharistic Miracle from 1636 until 1902, when the present altar was built.

We walk to the back of the main altar, where there is a stairway leading up to the second tabernacle, to the Eucharistic Miracle. A priest from the church dresses in vestments worn for the celebration of Holy Mass, and leads us to the top of the stairway. The Monstrance and the miracle are before our eyes. We are allowed to ascend in groups of five. The priest puts a flashlight in back of the Host turned Flesh. This is an actual heart muscle. With the light in the background, the fibers of the heart can be seen. The chalice which holds the Blood is believed to be the same one into which the Blood was placed after the miracle, and possibly the actual chalice which was used for the Mass when the miracle took place. The Host has turned light brown over the years. When the priest puts the light in back of it, it appears rose colored. The Blood has an ochre appearance.

It's impossible to truly appreciate the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano without seeing the impact it has on those who witness it.

All questions and doubts about the physical presence of Jesus in the Eucharist become a matter of rhetoric when you are privileged to witness those who have seen the miracle. They descend the steps in tears. Many go down on their knees at the sight of the miracle. What had possibly

been curious, doubting Thomases become dumbfounded, awestruck believers. They go back to their pews and just sit there, silent, weeping, praying. One priest who went with us to Lanciano in 1983 wrote to us, "I can never raise the host or wine in Consecration again, without seeing my Lord's very Heart between my fingers, His Blood alive in the Chalice before me."

A pilgrim, born and baptised Catholic, shared with his convert wife, after venerating the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, "I never believed in the physical presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. To me, it was strictly 'in memory of Him'. Now, I truly believe that my Jesus comes alive to me personally in the Consecrated Host that I consume at Holy Mass."

On one occasion, after the priest had shown all our pilgrims the Eucharistic Miracle, he came down to the foot of the altar, and made the following observation: *"Remember, this miracle that you are witnessing now, and that you have traveled so far to witness, happens every day in every church in the world, at the consecration of the Mass."*

How many tests have been made over the years, how many times Our Dear Lord Jesus allows Himself to be prodded and cut, examined under microscopes, and photographed. The most recent, an extensive scientific research done in 1970, used the most modern scientific tools available. The results of the tests are as follows:



- The flesh is real flesh. The blood is real blood.
- The flesh consists of the muscular tissue of the heart (myocardium)
- The flesh and blood belong to the human species.
- The flesh and blood have the same blood type (AB).

- In the blood, there were found proteins in the same normal proportions as are found in the sero-proteic make up of fresh, normal blood.
- In the blood, there were also found these minerals: Chlorides, phosphorous, magnesium, potassium, sodium and calcium. The preservation of the flesh and of the blood, which were left in their natural state for twelve centuries (without any chemical preservatives) and exposed to the action of atmospheric and biological agents, remains an extraordinary phenomenon.

As part of this most recent investigation, the following comment was made: "Though it is alien to my task strictly speaking, I feel I should insert the following reflection into the study just completed: the clarification, which comes through in these studies, of the nature of the flesh gives little support to the hypothesis of a 'fraud' perpetrated centuries ago. As a matter of fact supposing that the heart may have been taken from a cadaver, I maintain that only a hand experienced in anatomic dissection would have been able to obtain from a hollow internal organ such a uniform cut (as can still be glimpsed in the flesh)."

What the doctor, a scientist and not a theologian, is saying in simple language is that although it's not his task to speculate it would have been difficult, next to *impossible*, for anyone to have cut a slice of the heart in the way that it was done. He also states that it's highly doubtful that there was any fraud involved.

Another unusual characteristic of the blood is that when liquified, it has retained the chemical properties of freshly shed blood. When we cut ourselves and stain our clothes, the chemical properties of the blood are gone within 20 minutes to a half hour. If blood is not refrigerated within an hour maximum, the composition rapidly breaks down. If blood were taken from a dead body, it would lose its qualities quickly through decay. This blood is over 1250 years old and still contains all its properties, chemicals and protein of freshly shed blood. And yet in the testing, it was determined that *no preservatives of any kind* were found in the blood.

Jesus gives us His Heart again in the Eucharistic Miracle which is a Heart muscle. He gives us His Blood again in this miraculous form to heal us. He gives us His Blood with His Body in the Eucharist every day to heal us and nourish us.

There are instances in history, which we'll explore in this book, where people lived for years on no other nourishment than the Eucharist.

"He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food, and my blood real drink." John 6:54-56

We believe that the most perfect form of love is the Eucharistic Love of Jesus. In the Miracle of Lanciano, He loves us by revealing His very Heart and His very Blood. It helps us to understand the sacrifice of our Perfect Lamb, Jesus, in the Holy Mass. *How much do I love you? Here is my Heart. How much do I love you? Here is my blood. being shed for you.*

Each day during the Mass, Jesus, completely vulnerable, offers us His very heart for us to accept or reject. We become part of the Incarnation again: God, one with man-God be-coming man. As Mary carried Jesus below her heart, we too are allowed to carry now Jesus' very Heart, His Body, His Love in our heart. And we are never the same.

As a postscript to the Miracle of Lanciano, we should note that in 1978, a group of scientists from NASA performed an intensive examination on the Shroud of Turin, using all the sophisticated scientific equipment available to our Space Agency at that time. Among the many findings the scientists made in support of the authenticity of the Shroud, a very significant discovery was found regarding the blood type on the Shroud. It was AB positive, the same blood type as found in the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano. More and more, science has verified what we have believed in Faith for centuries.

Miracles of the Eucharist -Eucharistic miracles of Santarem, Amsterdam and Offida



Three extraordinary miracles of the Eucharist – Santarem, Amsterdam & Offida

The miracle of the Eucharist in Santarem, Portugal (1225) -An ongoing miracle

Around the year 1225 there was a woman living in Santarem, who was very unhappy with her marriage. She was convinced that her husband did not love her, and was unfaithful. She initially tried numerous things to win back the affection of her husband, but to no avail. As a desperate last attempt, she went to a sorceress. The sorceress promised the wife that her husband would return to his loving ways, if the wife would bring her a Consecrated Host.

This of course greatly frightened the woman, because she knew it was sacrilege, but nevertheless she finally gave in. She went to Mass at the Church of St. Steven, and received Communion, but did not consume the Host. Instead, she left the Church immediately, and took the Host out of her mouth, putting It into her veil. She then went to the sorceress.

Along the way, the Host began to bleed inside the veil. The wife was not aware of it until passersby brought it to her attention, thinking she herself

was bleeding. Panic struck the woman and instead of going to the sorceress' house, she rushed home. She then put the bloody veil containing the Host into the bottom of a trunk, not knowing what else to do. When her husband came home, she said nothing.

Later in the night they were awakened by mysterious bright rays of light coming from the trunk, penetrating the wood and illuminating the entire room. The wife then confessed her sin to her husband and both of them knelt in adoration for the remaining hours until dawn, when the parish priest was summoned.



News of the mysterious event spread quickly and attracted countless people who wanted to contemplate the miracle. Because of the furor, an episcopal Church investigation was promptly organized.

A miracle upon a miracle

The bloody Host was taken in procession to the Church of St. Stephen, where it was encased in wax (to contain the blood and the Host) and secured in the tabernacle. Some time later when the tabernacle was opened, another miracle was discovered. The wax that had encased the Host was found broken into pieces, and the Host was found miraculously enclosed in a crystal pyx, along with the precious Blood. This was later placed in a gold and silver pear-shaped monstrance with a "sunburst" of

33 rays, in which it is still contained today.

After the investigation and approval by the Church authorities, the Church of St. Stephen was renamed "The Church of the Holy Miracle." The little house where the miracle occurred was on Via delle Stuoie in Santarem.

From the time of the miracle until now, every year, on the Second Sunday of April, the incident is re-enacted by local actors. The actual Eucharistic Miracle is processed from the house, which was converted into a Chapel in 1684, to the Church. Miraculously, after 750 years, the precious blood still remains in liquid form, defying the natural laws of science. The Host is somewhat irregularly shaped, resembling real flesh with delicate veins running from top to bottom, where a quantity of blood is collected in the crystal.



The miracle of the Eucharist in Amsterdam (1345) –Thrown into a fire, the Eucharist miraculously is not burned

In 1345, Amsterdam was a tiny fishing village consisting of four streets and a few alleys lined up along the main canal. There were small modest fishermen's huts, a church, and a monastery. The monastery was the largest building in the city. The Eucharistic Miracle given to this tiny village on March 13, 1345, was the beginning of the growth for which Amsterdam is now famous. In fact, on the 600th anniversary of the

miracle, March 13, 1945, the Dutch Catholics attributed all the growth and progress of their city to the Eucharistic Miracle which we will now present.

The Eucharistic miracle occurred in a house on Kalverstreet where a fisherman named Ysbrant Dommer on his deathbed called for a priest to come to his home to give him the last rites of the Church and Holy Communion. After having heard the man's confession, the priest blessed him with the oils of Extreme Unction, and gave him Communion.

The priest had no sooner left than the sick man began coughing violently. His wife ran over to him in an effort to help him, but the husband, gagging and choking beyond control, vomited the contents of his stomach, including the Host, still intact. The wife reacted instinctively. She swept up the Host and threw it into the fireplace. She soon realized her grave mistake, but the fire was raging, and she was not about to put her hands into it for fear of burning herself. That night she slept fitfully, tossing and turning. She was afraid she had committed a terrible sin and had nightmares about the Sacred Host that she had thrown into the fire.

The following morning, as soon as she got out of bed, she went over to the fireplace. The fire was not extinguished yet, and the coals were still quite hot. She stoked the coals, looking for the Eucharist. To her amazement she suddenly saw the Host sitting atop a burning ember. It was not burned at all. It had not even turned color. The Host was fresh and brilliant, lying among the coals. She immediately snatched the Host from the fire, and carefully wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in a chest for safekeeping.

She then called the priest who had been to her house the previous night and told him the story. The priest then placed the Host into a pyx and washed the cloth in which it had been wrapped. He then carried the Host to the parish church of St. Nicholas. The priest thought it best not to tell anyone about the incident, so as not to stir up gossip involving the woman or her husband. He took the Host, wrapped in the cloth, and returned it to the church, where he placed it in the tabernacle.

The following morning, the priest found the pyx empty to his amazement, but the Host was soon discovered by the same woman when she opened the chest to remove some linens. She was stunned and confused as she knew the priest had taken it away the day before. Had she committed

such a terrible sin, that the Lord brought back the proof to punish her with the sight of It? She ran to the Church, and explained what had happened to the priest. Again the priest placed the Eucharist into a pyx and returned it to the church. Then, after yet another disappearance and discovery, the priest contacted other members of the clergy for consultation. All agreed that the occurrences were a direct proof of God's intercession, and apparently a sign that the miracle should be openly honored. Jesus wanted to use this miracle to awaken His sleeping people. The Miraculous Host was a light which was to shine all over Europe.

The priest told his fellow friars about the miracle, and the story of which soon spread about the town and the surrounding countryside. When the priest formed a procession to go to the fisherman's house for the Sacred Host, a huge crowd followed him and his fellow priests. They carried the Sacred Host back to the church of St. Nicholas affording Our Lord the honor He deserved for giving such a rich gift to these humble people.

Another wonderful element to the story is that the fisherman who had been dying, the one whom the priest brought the Eucharist on that first night, didn't die. To the contrary, he recovered, thanks be to God. However, when word of the miracle reached the ears of the townspeople, and those from other villages, they all went to the fisherman's house to see where the miracle had taken place. It soon became sort of a shrine, and soon afterwards, a Chapel.

Official inquiries were made by the civil magistrate and also the city council, and upon investigation all were satisfied with the truthfulness of the witnesses. They affirmed the occurrence as fact and also endorsed the miracle in official City documents. The Church authorities, too, headed by the Bishop of Utrecht, held an extended inquiry before permitting the clergy to spread information about the event.

In a Pastoral letter, the Bishop officially declared that an authentic miracle had occurred in the little town of Amsterdam. In the same pastoral letter, he authorized veneration of the Eucharistic Miracle of the Host. The little house of the fisherman was soon converted into a Chapel, called Nieuwe Zijds, or Holy Place and the Miraculous Host was placed upon the main altar, for the adoration of the people. The fireplace of the fisherman's hut was kept intact, and became a permanent part of the new shrine.

Miracle upon Miracle –The second miracle of 1452

A second miracle took place 100 years later. Amsterdam had grown considerably in the century since the first miracle had taken place. On May 24, 1452 the entire city of Amsterdam was engulfed in fire. Most of the buildings were destroyed by the blaze. When the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament (the former fisherman's hut) caught fire, some of the parishioners made an attempt to save the Miraculous Host from destruction by the flames. They tried to force open the tabernacle. The Host had been placed in a beautiful monstrance, which was inside the tabernacle. The heat of the Church was becoming unbearable. The workers worked feverishly, but to no avail. The heat of the fire had made it impossible to get the door open. As the roof of the Chapel began to cave in, the men ran out of the Church to safety, their mission a failure.

The entire Church collapsed and burned to the ground, including the tabernacle. Upon seeing this, there was a great sadness among the faithful of the city, especially those who had tried in vain to rescue the Eucharistic Miracle. The next day, they sifted through the ashes of the Church, hoping against hope, that something remained of their precious Host. Their grief turned to joy as soon they spotted the Monstrance, completely unscathed, there among the ashes of the Church. Even the silk veil which covered the Monstrance had been saved from the fire. So, once again the Lord saved the same Host from fire in the same house in Amsterdam.

Soon afterwards, a new chapel was built, more elaborate and more beautiful than the previous one. The fame of the Eucharistic Miracle of Amsterdam, now recognized as a twofold miracle, spread beyond the Netherlands to all of Europe. The Hapsburg Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Maxmillian, went to Amsterdam in pilgrimage to the Eucharistic Miracle. He prayed for a healing at the shrine, which was granted to him because of his faith. He showed his thanksgiving by donating beautiful gifts to the Chapel of the miracle. Amsterdam and the Eucharistic Miracle became a major place of pilgrimages and processions.



In 1665 the city council authorized Father Jan Van der Mey to convert one of the houses of the former convent of the Beghine into a chapel. After completion, the precious monstrance was transferred, but unfortunately was shortly afterwards taken by unknown thieves. Even today there is perpetual exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in memory of the miracle. The only objects that remain from the Eucharistic miracle are the case that contained the Sacred Host (pictured in the photo to the left), the documents that describe the miracle, and some paintings housed in the Historical Museum of Amsterdam. Every year there is a silent procession (Stille Omgang) in honor of the miracle on the eve of Palm Sunday.

The miracle of the Eucharist in Offida, Italy (1280) –The Story of Newlyweds, a Sorceress and a Mule.

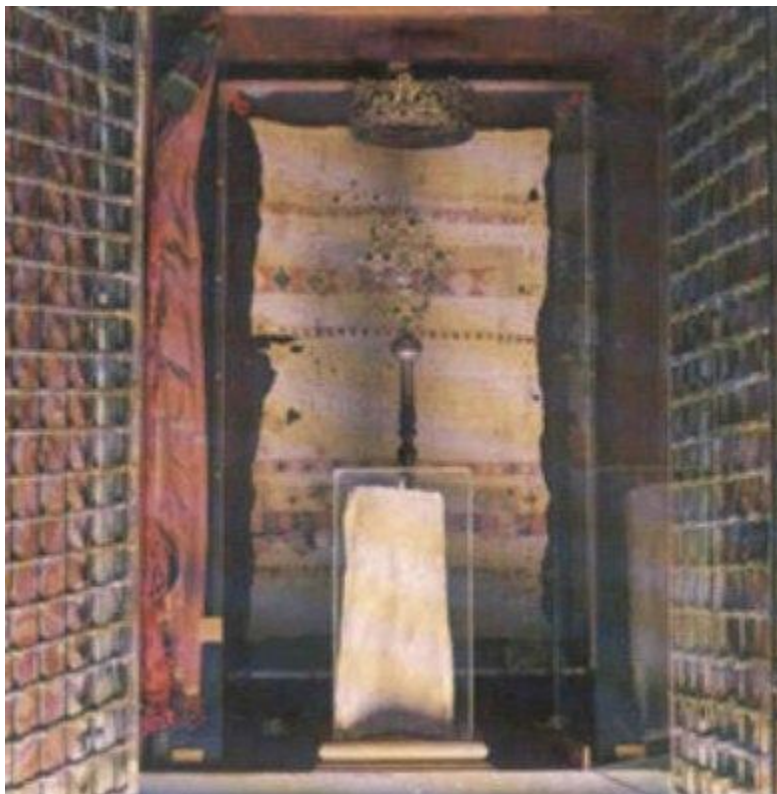
The Eucharistic miracle of Offida actually took place in the city of Lanciano, the site of another extraordinary miracle not related to this one. This miracle, which is now kept in Offida some 60 miles north of Lanciano, occurred in 1273 to a newlywed couple named Ricciarella and Giacomo (James) Stasio, their mule, and a witch.

The Eucharistic miracle of Offida has similar beginnings to that of Santarem Portugal as they both involved wives who were seeking to get more love and affection from their husbands. Unfortunately the newlyweds marriage was not off to a very good start as Giacomo was not very affectionate towards his new bride. Ricciarella, the wife of Giacomo Stasio, was deeply afflicted by her unhappy marriage, and she tried everything possible to win the love of her husband. Finally someone suggested she seek the advice of a nearby sorceress. who claimed to know of a way for her to achieve the marriage that she desired. The sorceress gave Ricciarella the following advice for a "love potion":

"Go to Communion, but don't swallow the Host. Take it home, put it in the stove, and burn it. Take the ashes, and throw them into his wine or soup.

Then let me know the effect. You'll see that he will immediately become more affectionate and loving towards you"

This description of how her husband would react to the potion gave Ricciarella just the incentive she needed to justify committing this sacrilegious act. She knew, of course, that this was wrong, and how she must have wrestled with her conscience before she made the decision to perform this horrible act. Eventually she worked up the courage and she set out for the church to take part in the Holy Mass. In desperation for relief from her sad situation, Ricciarella received the Eucharist, and secretly let the Host fall from her mouth into the top of her dress. After taking it home she placed it on a coppo, which is a semi-circular tile. She then placed the tile over a fire. As soon as the sacred Host was heated, instead of turning into powder it began to turn into a piece of bloody flesh. Horrified at what was taking place, Ricciarella attempted to stop the process by throwing ashes and wax onto the tile, but without success. The tile soon bore a huge smear of blood, and the flesh remained perfectly sound and blood came forth from the Host turned flesh.



Undertandably Ricciarella panicked. She didn't know what to do. Frantic for a way to dispose of the evidence of her sacrilege, Ricciarella took a linen tablecloth decorated with silk embroidery and lace and wrapped it around the tile and the bloody Host. Carrying the bundle outside, she went to the stable and

buried it in the place where garbage from the house and filth from the stalls were heaped.

When her husband returned home that evening accompanied by his work mule, he noticed that the mule was acting more stubborn than usual. The animal did not want to go into the stable. Giacomo tried pushing the mule, and then slapping him, all to no avail. Finally he got a whip and began beating the animal. The pain being more than the mule could endure, he reluctantly went into the barn, all the while staring at the dung heap. The animal fell prostrate near the dung heap, almost in a position of adoration.

The mule had never done such an extraordinary thing before and Giacomo knew for certain that something was causing this mysterious behavior in his mule. Giacomo then accused his wife of placing a spell on the stable that made the animal fearful of entering it. Ricciarella, of course, denied everything and remained silent about the cause of the difficulty.

For seven years the Blessed Sacrament remained hidden beneath the garbage, and for that period of time the mule and the other animals went in or out facing the dung heap, keeping their attention to the heap of refuse. For Ricciarella, this was the beginning of living hell. She felt great pangs of conscience for her sin. She came to realize more and more the seriousness and consequences of her actions. She was instead tormented day and night with remorse for her sin. Finally she decided to confess what she had done to a priest from the monastery of St. Agostino in Lanciano, Prior Giacomo Diotallevi, a native of Offida.

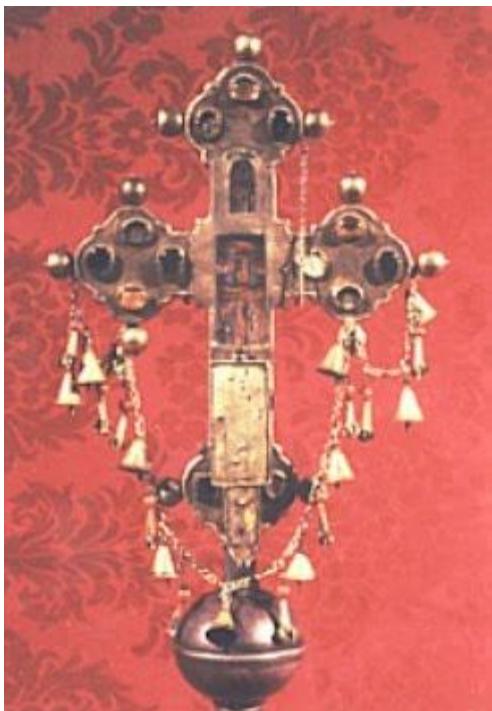
After Ricciarella confessed her grave sin to the priest, he accompanied her back to her home. They went into the stable, and dug through the dung which had accumulated over the seven years. When the friar pulled the table cloth out, and uncovered it, he found that the contents of the tile, the bleeding Flesh and the Host, had remained incorrupt over the years.

He took the tile and the table cloth containing the Host with him and he returned to his monastery. Initially he told no one of the incident. Ricciarella was relieved because her scandal would not be spread all over the province, and her deteriorated relationship with her husband would not worsen. No one is sure what the friar's motives were but he wanted the Eucharistic Miracle taken away from Lanciano, that is known. Was it

because he was sincerely afraid that if the miracle were revealed, Ricciarella would be implicated? Or did he want the glory of an incorrupt Eucharistic Miracle to be given to his home town Offida?

On a pretext, the Friar received permission from his superiors to leave the monastery. He left Lanciano in secrecy a few days later. He took the Sacred Host to a Fr. Michael Mallicani, who was the prior of the Augustinian monastery of Offida. Father Mallicani embraced the miracle as the property of Offida, and immediately created a sanctuary for It in that town. This was in the year 1280, seven years after Ricciarella had committed the Sacrilege.

Father Mallicani moved quickly. He and another friar went to Venice in the same year to have a beautiful reliquary built which was to become the home of the Eucharistic Miracle. They commissioned a silversmith to do the work under secrecy. For this reliquary a large amount of silver was donated and it was decided that the reliquary would be made in the shape of an artistic cross, and it was to contain not only the miraculous Host, but also a piece of wood from the true cross of Christ.



After he had finished the beautiful reliquary, and the priest had placed the Eucharistic Miracle inside, the friars left by boat to return to Offida. It was then that the silversmith decided to tell the local Duke of Venice what had transpired.

The Duke, anxious to get hold of a genuine Eucharistic Miracle for his own

province, ordered a ship to intercept the one carrying the two friars back to Offida. But in the end it was the Lord who intercepted! As the Duke's ship was about to overtake the friars, the Adriatic Sea became violent, allowing the friars to disembark at Ancona, and return safely to their monastery in Offida. The reliquary was installed in the Church in Offida and it remains there to this day. And so it is that today atop the main altar of the Sanctuary of Saint Augustine in Offida, also known as the Sanctuary of the Miraculous Eucharist, is found silver cross containing the miraculous Host. The tile on which Ricciarella heated the Host, still showing the smear and splotches of blood, is kept in a rectangular glass-sided case. The tablecloth in which the tile and the bloody Host were wrapped is also kept under glass. Paintings depicting the events of the miracle can also be found within the beautiful Church.

Incorruptible Bodies of the Saints



Below are specific examples of incorrupt bodies discovered over the past 2000 years (most recent listed first), most of which are still on display today.



Padre Pio - Born May 25, 1887 and died September 23, 1968, his body was exhumed nearly 40 years after his death in March 2008, and found to be incorrupt. He is the only priest known to have received the full stigmata (wounds) of Jesus Christ, and known for great miracles such as the odor of sanctity, bilocation, prophecy, conversion, reading of souls, and miraculous cures. He was known to have spoken out against the new Mass introduced by the Second Vatican Council, and never celebrated it. His body is now on

display in the church of Our Lady of Grace, in San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy.



Jacinta Marto - Jacinta Marto was one of the three original visionaries at Fatima, Portugal in 1917. She was born in 1910 and died in 1920. In both 1935 and 1951 her body was exhumed and in each instance, her body was found to be incorrupt. The Basilica of Our Lady of Fatima was built on the site where the three children first saw "a lady brighter than the sun" and Jacinta's tomb has remained there since 1951.



Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini - Also known as Mother Cabrini, she died in Chicago in 1917, and was entombed at that time in West Park, New York. In 1931 her remains were exhumed and found to be partially incorrupt. She was beatified in 1938 and in 1946 was the first US citizen to be canonized a Saint. Her partially incorrupt body covered in wax is now enshrined under the altar in the chapel at St. Francis Cabrini Shrine in New York City. See photo below.



Pope St.

Pius X - Pope St. Pius X was the 257th Catholic Pope, reigning from 1903 to 1914. He passed away on August 20, 1914 and was buried in the crypt below St. Peter's Basilica. On May 19, 1944, Pope Pius X's coffin was exhumed and was taken to the Chapel of the Holy Crucifix in St. Peter's Basilica for the canonical examination. Upon opening the coffin, the examiners found the body of Pope Pius X preserved, despite the fact that he had died 30 years before and had made wishes not to be embalmed.

Following his beatification, on February 17, 1952, Pope Pius X's body was transferred from its tomb to the Vatican basilica and placed under the altar of the chapel of the Presentation. The pontiff's body lies within a glass and bronze-work sarcophagus for the faithful to see. On May 29,

1954, less than three years after his beatification, Pope St. Pius X was canonized. See photos below.

Blessed Charbel Makhlouf - Was a priest in Lebanon who spent the last 23 years of his life in a hermitage, where he lived the monastic life. He died in 1898 at the age of 70 and according to the monastic custom, was not embalmed and was consigned to the grave without a coffin. An extraordinary bright light surrounded his tomb for 45 days afterward, which prompted an exhumation of his body four months later. His body was discovered completely incorrupt and placed in a coffin inside the monastery chapel. in 1950 his coffin was reopened and body was not only still perfectly incorrupt, flexible, and lifelike, but even after 52 years, doctors confirmed sweat and blood still exuded from the body. After the exhumation of the body in 1950, within a 2-year period, over 1200 miracles were documented. After 67 years of being incorrupt, in 1965, during his beatification, it was determined the body had finally complied with the laws of nature, with only reddish-colored bones remaining.



Saint Mary Mazzarello - Died in 1881 and was later discovered incorrupt. Her incorrupt body is venerated in the Basilica of Mary Our Help, in Turin, Italy. See the photo.



Saint Bernadette Soubirous(also pictured at the top of the page) - St. Bernadette was the original visionary at Lourdes, France and died in 1879 in Nevers, France. Her body was exhumed 30 years later in 1909 and was discovered completely incorrupt and free of odor. The body was again exhumed a second time ten years later in 1919 and again in 1925 and was still incorrupt. Her body is still on display in the Chapel of St. Bernadette in Nevers, France to this day. See photos below and body examination testimony [here](#).



Blessed Paula Frassinetti -
Died in 1882 and her body was exhumed and found to be incorrupt in 1906. Her body is on display in the Chapel of the Convent of Santa Dorotea in Rome, Italy.



St. Catherine Laboure' - Died in 1876 and was exhumed and found incorrupt and completely flexible in 1933. She was a sister of the Daughters of Charity and a Marian visionary who relayed the request from the Blessed Virgin Mary to create the Miraculous Medal, which is worn by millions of Catholics and even non-Catholics today. Her body is on display under the side altar in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Sun in Paris. See photo below.



St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney (also known as St. John Vianney and the Cure' of Ars) - Died in 1859 and was exhumed and found incorrupt in 1904. His body is on display above the main altar in the Basilica at Ars in France. See photo below.



St. Vincent Pallotti - Died in 1850 and was exhumed and found incorrupt and sweetly scented in 1906 and again in 1950. His body is on display under the main altar in the Church of St. Salvatore in Onda, Italy. See picture below.



Bl. Anna Marie Taigi - Died in 1837 at the age of 64 and after 18 years her coffin was opened and body found to be incorrupt. On August 18, 1865 her body was transferred to the Church of San Crisogono in Trastevere (Rome) where it remains to the present day, still incorrupt. See actual photo below.



St. Teresa Margaret - Died in 1770 and was exhumed and found incorrupt in 1783. Her body is on display in a glass case at the Monastery of St. Teresa in Florence, Italy. See photo below.



St. Veronica Giuliani - Died in 1727 and later found incorrupt. See photo below.



St. Margaret Mary Alacoque - Died in 1690 at the age of 43. Her tomb was canonically opened 140 years later in 1830 and body found to be incorrupt. She was a French Roman Catholic nun and mystic, who promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which has become popular among Catholics. The Catholic Church investigated and affirmed the credibility of her visions in 1928. Her body rests under the altar in the chapel at Paray in France. See picture below.



Ven. Mary of Agreda - Died in 1665 and was later discovered incorrupt. She is credited with authoring the "Mystical City of God" through revelation from the Blessed Virgin. Her body has been examined again in later years, including in 1909 and 1989 with no degradation to the body. Her body has remained incorrupt for over 340 years and is kept in a convent in Spain. See photo below.

St. Andrew Bobola - He was severely tortured and intentionally killed in 1657, and was thereafter buried beneath a Jesuit church at Pinsk. After 40 years his body was discovered incorrupt, despite the body's proximity to other decaying corpses and the excessive wounds on his body that normally would have fostered corruption. His body is still as flexible as a live body and is on display under the main altar in the Church of St. Andrew Bobola in Warsaw, Poland.



St. Francis Xavier - Died 1552 and was discovered incorrupt, despite the fact that lime was placed in his casket to expedite decomposition. His body was also said to have bled normally one and a half years after death during an examination by a physician. The body is now in the in the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa, where it was placed in a glass container encased in a silver casket on December 2, 1637. See photo below.



St. Angela Merici - Died in 1540 and her body remained intact for centuries. She is buried in the Church of St. Afra at Brescia. See photo below.

Bl. Osanna of Manua' - Died in 1505. Her body is on display under the altar in Our Lady of the Rosary in the Cathedral of Manua, Italy. In 1965 the relic of her body was examined in depth and still found to be well preserved (460 years old!)



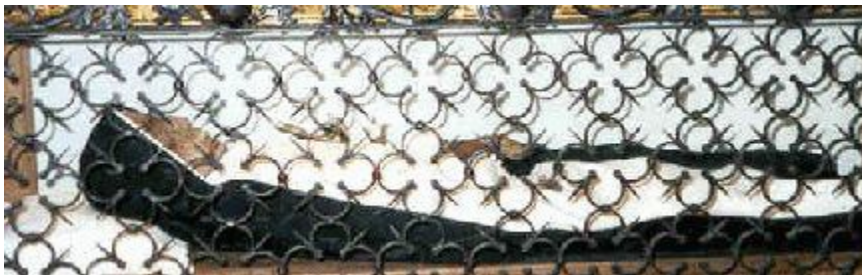
St. Catherine of Bologna Died in 1463 and has been incorrupt and on display in an upright position for over 500 years. See photo below.



St. Rita of Cascia - Died in 1457. Her body kept a sweet fragrance all of these centuries and is on display in a glass case in the Basilica of St. Rita in Cascia, Italy. It is also publicly known that her body has been seen in different positions in the glass case, as well as eyes having opened and closed unaided. See photo below.



Blessed Imelda Lambertini - Known better as Blessed Imelda, she died as a young girl in 1333 and was later found incorrupt. She was beatified in 1826 and her incorrupt body is on display in the Church of San Sigismondo in Bologna, Italy. See photo below.



Blessed Margaret of Metola (Castello) - Died in 1320 and was found incorrupt in 1558. Her body is on display under the high altar of the Church of St. Domenico at Citta-di-Castello, Italy. See photo below.



St. Agnes of Montepulciano - Died in Italy in 1317 and was later found incorrupt. She remained whole and incorrupt until the 16th century when, due to excessive humidity in her tomb, some of her body decomposed. Much of her body has still remained intact for 7 centuries now, including limbs and bones, which are now enclosed in a figure of the Saint on display at the Sanctuary of St. Agnes in Montepulciano, Italy. See photo below.



St. Clare of Montefalco - Died in 1308 and though her body was embalmed, her body has still remained perfectly incorrupt (beyond what embalming can provide in over 7 centuries). Her body is still normally flexible and displayed in the church of the Augustinian nuns of Montefalco, Italy. See photo below.



St. Zita - Died in 1278 and her body is on display in a glass reliquary in the Basilica of St. Frediano in Lucca, Italy. See photo below.

St. Sperandia - Died in 1276 her body is on display in the Benedictine convent church of Cingoli, Italy. Her body was exhumed eight different times, the last in 1952. It is still incorrupt to this day and exudes a sweet fragrance.

Saint Alphege - Was Archbishop of Canterbury and was captured, put in prison, and eventually murdered by his captors in 1012. Ten years later his perfectly incorrupt body was discovered.

Saint Withburga - Died in 743 and incorrupt body was discovered 55 years later. Her remains were on display for over 300 more years thereafter until destroyed during the Reformation.

Saint Etheldreda - Died in 679 and was later found incorrupt. Her remains were intact for nearly 800 years until the Reformation when, at the orders of Henry VIII, her relics were scattered and shrine destroyed.

Saint Agatha - Died in 251 and body was discovered incorrupt in the eleventh century. Parts of her incorrupt body are still in existence today.



Saint Cecilia - Died in 177 and her body was discovered incorrupt in 1599. St. Cecilia is known to be the first saint to be incorrupt. Below is a statue of St. Cecilia created during the exhumation of her incorrupt body in 1599. The position is the same as the actual body and is believed to be the position in which she died. The statue is located in the Basilica of St. Cecilia in Rome.

Incorrupt Bodies of the Saints



Certain Saints, at the time of their death or many years later after they were exhumed, were found to be incorruptable. That is to say, their bodies did not decompose. There are more than 250 incorrupt bodies of Catholic saints.

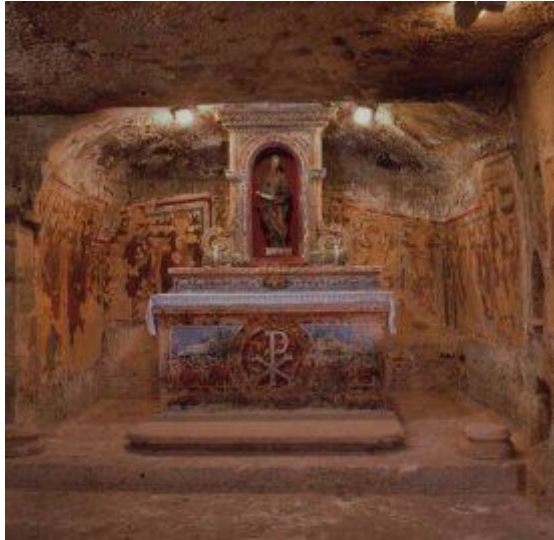
Icon of Saint Clare courtesy of www.MonasteryIcons.com

Saint Agatha - Her body was discovered incorrupt in the eleventh century. Parts of her incorrupt body are still in existence today.

According to variations of her legend, having rejected the amorous advances of a Roman prefect, she was persecuted by him for her Christian faith. Among the tortures she underwent was the cutting off of her breasts. She is therefore often depicted iconographically carrying her excised breasts on a platter.

The shape of her amputated breasts gave rise to her attribute as patron saint of bell-founders. More recently she is venerated as patron saint of breast cancer patients.

Her scorned admirer eventually sentenced her to death by being burnt at the stake. However, she was saved from this fate by a mysterious earthquake. She later died in prison. Name Meaning good



Saint Agatha (Unknown - 251 A.D.)

Saint Catherine Laboure died on 31st December 1876. When her body was exhumed 56 years later it was unblemished. Her eyes were as blue as the day she died. Catherine Laboure is still lying in state at the right of the altar in the chapel Rue du Bac 140, in Paris and she still looks as though she only died yesterday!



Saint Catherine Laboure (1806 - 1876)

The body of Saint Bernadette Soubirous was first exhumed 30 years after her death. On September 2, 1909. Her arms and face were completely unaffected from corruption

and had maintained their natural skin tone. The second exhumation took place at the end of the Process on April 3, 1919. The body of the Venerable was found in the same state of preservation as 10 years earlier. This sacred relic was placed in a coffin of gold and glass and can be viewed in the Chapel of Saint Bernadette at the motherhouse in Nevers (France).



Saint Bernadette Soubirous (1844 - 1879)

Saint Cecilia - The year of her birth is unknown. She died about 177 A.D. at Rome and her body was discovered incorrupt in 1599, is known to be the first saint to be incorrupt. Virgin and martyr, patroness of church music.

The statue is a copy of the famous work by Stefano Maderno (1566-1636), carried out in 1599, when there took place the recognition of her relics. The body was found in the position represented by the sculptor.



Saint Cecilia (Unknown - 177 A.D.)

Poem

Blessed Cecilia, appear in
visions
To all musicians, appear and
inspire:
Translated Daughter, come
down and startle
Composing mortals with
immortal fire.

The tomb of Saint Clare of Assisi was found in 1850. On 23 September in that year the coffin was unearthed and opened, the flesh and clothing of the saint had been reduced to dust, but the skeleton was in a perfect state of preservation. Finally, on the 29th of September, 1872, the saint's bones were transferred, with much pomp, by Archbishop Pecci, afterwards Leo XIII, to the shrine, in the crypt at Santa Chiara, erected to receive them, and where they may now be seen.



Saint Clare of Assisi (1194 - 1253)

The body of Saint Maria Goretti is interred in the church of Our Lady of Mercy in Nettuno (Italy). Her incorrupt body is there and she is absolutely beautiful.



Saint Maria Goretti (1890 - 1902)

Saint Etheldreda (also known as Audrey, Æthelthryth, Ethelreda, Edilthride, Ediltrudis, Edeltrude)

Queen of South Gyrwe, Queen of Northumbria, Abbess of Ely
Born: AD 630 at Exning, Suffolk - Died: 23rd June AD 679 at Ely Abbey, Cambridgeshire

She was the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia and Queen Hereswide of England.

17 years after her death her body was found to be incorrupt. The linen cloths in which her body was wrapped were as fresh as the day she had been buried. Her body was placed in a stone sarcophagus of Roman origin, found at Grantchester and reburied. At the Reformation, all their shrines were destroyed and the incorrupt body parts dispersed. When her shrine at Ely Cathedral was destroyed, the saintly Queen

Etheldreda's hand was preserved by a devout Catholic family. The still incorrupt hand was enshrined, some 400 years later, when a little Catholic Church was re-established in Ely. An apocryphal story relates how the present Queen, on a tour of the cathedral, met the crusty Irish priest of the little Catholic Church. She asked him if it wouldn't be a 'nice gesture' to return the hand of St Etheldreda to the cathedral; he replied that it would be a nice gesture for her to return the cathedral to the Catholic church.



Saint Etheldreda (630 - 679)

St. Jean-Marie-Baptiste Vianney (Cure' of Ars) - Died in 1859 and was exhumed and found incorrupt in 1904. His body is on display above the main altar in the Basilica at Ars in France.

St. John Mary Vianney was ordained a priest in 1815. Three years later he was made parish priest of Ars, a remote French hamlet, where his reputation as a confessor and director of souls made him known throughout the Christian world. His life was one of extreme mortification.



Saint John Vianney (1786 1859)

Rita of Cascia died on May 22, 1457. The incorrupt body of this “patron saint of hopeless cases” can be seen at the Basilica of St Rita in Cascia, Italy. It is also publicly known that her body has been seen in different positions in the glass case, as well as eyes have opened and closed unaided. Her symbol is the rose petal, which she shares with St Therese of Lisieux. Rita was beatified by pope Urban VIII in 1627 and canonized on May 24, 1900 by Pope Leo XIII.



Rita of Cascia (1381 - 1457)

Saint Catherine of Bologna (1413-1463) - Also known as Catherine de Virgi. Feastday March 9 - Patroness of Artist.

In Lent of 1463, Catherine became seriously ill, and she died on March 9. Buried without a coffin, her body was exhumed eighteen days later because of cures attributed to her and also because of the sweet scent coming from her grave.

Her body is later enshrined in the chapel of the Poor Clares at Bologna. The flesh has grown dark, but that may well have been because of the heat and soot of the candles that were burned for years around her exposed remains. In that shrine, her body is not recumbent but seated! This was in response, it is said, to a request she made of one of her sisters to whom she appeared in a vision in 1500. She was canonized in 1712 by Pope Benedict XIII.



Saint Catherine of Bologna (1413 - 1463)

Saint Francis Xavier; also known as Apostle to the Far East, was born as Francisco de Jasso y Azpilcueta, on April 7th, 1506 in the Castle of Xavier at Javier, near Sanguesa in Navarre (Spain).

His dream was evangelizing China, but this was never realized. He fell ill of a fever within the sight of Canton. They brought him to the island of Sancian, where he died after 2 weeks, on December 2, 1552, at age 46, without having reached mainland China. He was buried in Sancian island in a wooden coffin as they used to do in China. On December 11, 1553, Xavier's body was shipped to Goa. Two layers of quicklime were added in order to accelerate the process of corruption, which would facilitate the transference of his bones. Two and a half months later, the coffin was unearthed. To the surprise of all present, after the lime had been removed, they found the body totally incorrupt, as if it were still alive. And a sweet fragrance is said to have issued from the coffin. After replacing the lime, the coffin was sailed to Malacca. On arrival it was opened and the body was still found to have the freshness of a living person. The body was then buried this time without a coffin.

The body, having resisted extensive decay, is now in the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Goa where it was placed in a glass container encased in a silver casket on December 2, 1637. Francis Xavier was beatified 25 October 1619 by Pope Paul V and canonized 12 March 1622 by Pope Gregory XV.

His memorial is: 3 December



Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552)

Blessed Margaret of Castello; also known as: Margaret of Citta-di-Castello; Margaret of Metola.

She died on April 13, 1320 at the age of 33. When she died, the townspeople thronged to her funeral and demanded that "the saint" be buried in a tomb inside the church. The priest protested, but when a crippled girl was miraculously cured at the funeral, the people had their way. More than 200 miracles have been credited to her intercession after her death.

In 1558, her remains were transferred because her coffin was rotten. Her clothes were also rotten, but her body was preserved. She was beatified on October 19, 1609 by Pope Paul V and awaits canonization as a Saint. Thus the daughter that nobody wanted is one of the glories of the Church. God has given to us an illustration of how handicapped persons fit in with His eternal plan. Take courage, then, you who are handicapped. God loves you doubly! Till today the body of Blessed Margaret is still incorrupt.



Blessed Margaret of Castello (1287 - 1320)

Teresa of Avila; also known as: Theresa of Avila; The Roving Nun; Teresa de Avila.

Teresa of Avila was born as Teresa Ali Fatim Corella Sanchez de Cepeda y Ahumada in Avila, Spain, on March 28, 1515. She was a daughter of Don Alonso Sanchez de Cepeda, a son of a Toledan merchant, and Doña Beatriz Davila y Ahumada, originally from Tordesillas.

She died in 1582. Her body was exhumed several times after her death, and each time found sweet-smelling, firm, and incorrupt. Her heart, hands, right foot, right arm, left eye and part of her jaw are on display in various sites around the world.



Saint Teresa of Avila (1515 - 1582)

Saint Catherine of Siena; also known as Catharine of Siena - Memorial: 29 April; (formerly 30 April)

Catherine died on April 29th in 1380 of a mysterious and painful illness that came on without notice, and was never properly diagnosed. She was Thirty-three years old. About fifty years after she died, her body was found to be incorrupt. Pope Pius II canonized Catherine in 1461. Her feast day is 29 April. In 1866 she became co-patron saint of Rome. Since 1939 she is the patron saint of Italy together with Francis of Assisi. Of all the spiritual stars, Catherine of Siena is one of the very greatest. Catherine is the only woman other than Saint Teresa of Avila, who was declared a Doctor of the Church on October 4, 1970 by pope Paul VI. Further she got the title co-patronship of Europe by John Paul II in 1999.



Saint Catherine of Siëna (1347 - 1380)

Saint John of God; also known as: Juan de Dios (Spanish); João de Deus (Portuguese)

Saint John of God was born Juan Ciudad on March 8th, 1495 at Montemoro Novo, Evora, Portugal, of poor but very devout Christian parents. At the age of eight he left home and worked as a shepherd for a farmer, who was very pleased with him. John had an offer to marry the farmer's daughter and become heir to the property; but he refused because he wanted to pursue a spiritual life.

Before he died on 8 March 1550 at Granada, Spain, his selfless dedication to the sick brought him to be known as "John of God". By faithfully following his example, the Order of Brothers formed after the death of St. John of God has passed on John's way of serving for those in need. It is called "Hospitality" and after five centuries it remains the charism of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God.

In 1570 the fragrant body of the Saint was found entire, except for the tip of the nose. The relics are kept in a chest of beautiful wood in the Basilica of Saint John of God in Granada.



Saint John of God (1495 - 1550)

Saint Rose of Lima was born on April 20, 1586 at Lima, Peru, of a Spaniard, Gaspar de Flores, and Maria d'Olivia, as one of ten children. She received from baptism the name of Isabel Flores de Oliva. At three months old Isabella was in her cradle as her mother and several other women were sitting around it there suddenly appeared in the air a beautiful rose; which gently touched the face of the baby and then vanished; and from that day on Maria called her Rose. Despite her family's attempt to have her marry, Rose took a vow of virginity.

She began to tell of visions, revelations, visitations and voices as they deplored her penitential practices more than ever. She took the name of Rose at her confirmation in 1597. She received Holy Communion daily, and was conferred the habit of the third order of Saint Dominic in 1606, at the age of 20. Rose increased the already extreme penances. She helped the sick and hungry around her community. She would bring them to her home and take care of them.

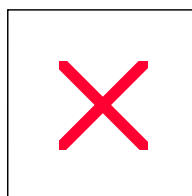
She died August 25, 1617 at the age of 31. As she had requested, her body was buried in the cloister of St. Dominic's church, where it was found in 1630 in a very good condition. The relics of the Saint are now conserved in two locations; in the Dominican Church of Santo Domingo. The rest of her relics are kept in the neighbourhood in a small church, which was built on the ground where Rose lived. Many miracles followed her death. Each year the devout make a pilgrimage to the chapel in Santa Rosa de Quives where she lived and worshipped. Saint Rose of Lima

was beatified April, 15, 1668 by Pope Clement IX and canonized April 2, 1671 by Pope Clement X. She is represented wearing a crown of roses.



Saint Rose of Lima (1586 - 1617)

Feastday: September 23



Padre Pio was born in Pietralcina, Italy, on May 25, 1887. The 4th child of Grazio Maria Forgione and Maria Giuseppa De Nunzio, he was given the name Francesco, after a brother who died shortly after birth. From the time he was very young, it was

his desire to join the Monks at the Monastery who "wore the beard". His dream to join the Catholic Capuchin Order of Friars Minor was realized in 1903 when he was admitted at the Friary of Morcone in the Province of Foggia. In 1916, struggling with ill health, he transferred to the Friary of Our Lady of Grace in San Giovanni Rotondo and there he remained. This humble Capuchin Priest from San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy, was blessed by God in many wonderful and mysterious ways. He became famous for his stigmata.

Early in the morning of September 23, 1968, Padre Pio made his last confession and renewed his Franciscan vows. As was customary, he had his rosary in his hands, though he did not have the strength to say the Hail Marys aloud. Till the end, he repeated the words "Gesù, Maria" (Jesus, Mary). At around 2:30am, he said, "I see two mothers" (taken to mean his mother and Mary). At 2:30 a.m. he breathed his last in his cell in San Giovanni Rotondo with his last breath whispering, "Maria!"

Pio, which is purported to be incorrupt. The body was exhumed in early March 2008 and since its exhumation has been viewed by over 7.000 pilgrims a day. As we can see from these shots, the body is obviously in a remarkable state of preservation. Take a look:



Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (1887 - 1968)

Incorrupt Bodies

Of the Saints

"You will not allow your holy one to see corruption" - Ps 15.

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Brief Introduction

The incorrupt bodies of these saints are simply a living witness or proof to the truth of the Catholic religion as the one true faith from God, who has confirmed the testimony of the Church in the great miracles he has worked through it's saints.

The Council of Trent:

"The bodies of holy martyrs and others now living with Christ, bodies which were His members and temples of the Holy Spirit, which one day are to be raised up by Him and made glorious in everlasting life, are to be venerated by the faithful; God gives men many benefits through them."

The Bodies of the saints for us are like great and holy relics, which move us to honor the saints who God has chosen to honor by preserving them incorrupt.

In scripture we read that the use of the bones of Elisha brought a dead man to life: "So Elisha died, and they buried him. Now bands of Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year. And as a man was being buried, lo, a marauding band was seen and the man was cast into the grave of Elisha; and as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood on his feet." (2 Kgs. 13:20-21).

A woman was cured of a hemorrhage by touching the hem of Christ's cloak (Matt. 9:20-22). The sick were healed when Peter's shadow passed over them (Acts 5:15-16). "And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them" (Acts 19:11-12).

The Power of the relics to work miracles doesn't come from the object itself but from God, who confirms the faith of the person who is healed by means of them as to testify to the holiness of His saints.

Saint Silvan, Martyr



Not much is known about this beautiful saint except that he was martyred in the fourth century. Look closely at the picture and you can see a large slice in his neck, an obvious clue to his martyrdom. Also you can see an embroidered cross on the front of his garment indicating that he may have been a priest or some other cleric. St Silvan's magnificently incorrupt body can be viewed in the Church of St. Blaise at Dubrovnik, Croatia.



Saint Clare of Assisi



St. Clare was the Cofoundress of the Order of Poor Clares and the first Abbess of San Damiano. She was born at Assisi, Italy, on the 16th of July in the year 1194, the eldest daughter of a rich family. At an early age she gained a great distaste for worldly affairs; and when she was eighteen years of age, greatly encouraged and aided by the great St. Francis of Assisi, she decided to leave the world and join a convent. Late at night, on the 20th of March in the year 1212, Clare left for the monastery without her parents' permission. St. Francis and his disciples met her with lighted candles in their hands. Clare then laid aside her rich dress; and St. Francis, having cut off her hair, clothed her in a rough tunic and a thick veil. In this way the young heroine vowed herself to the service of Jesus Christ. When her parents discovered her departure, her father, in a violent effort to bring her home, immediately followed her to the monastery. But Clare refused to return to the worldly life from which she had just departed.

Clare first joined the Benedictines, but later she and other fugitives from the world began the order of the Poor Clares in a rude dwelling adjoining the chapel of San Damiano.

In 1234, when the army of Frederick II was devastating the valley of Spoleto, the soldiers made an assault upon Assisi. They scaled the walls of San Damiano by night, spreading terror among the community. Calmly rising from her bed, Clare took the ciborium from the little chapel adjoining her cell and proceeded to face the invaders at an open window against which they had already placed a ladder. As she raised the Blessed Sacrament on high, the soldiers who were about to enter the monastery fell backward as if dazzled; and the others who were ready to attack took flight.

St. Clare died in Assisi on the 11th of August in the year 1253. On September 23, 1850, her coffin was unearthed and opened. The flesh and clothing of the saint had been reduced to dust, but the skeleton was perfectly incorrupt. Her bones may be seen in the crypt at Santa Chiara, Italy.

Saint Zita



Zita was born in the beginning of the thirteenth century at Montsegradi, a village near Lucca, Italy. Her mother raised her with the fear and love of the Lord, and at an early age she was very devoted to prayers and self-mortifications. She did all with the intention of honoring the good God that created her.

When Zita was still young, she went to Lucca to work as a maid for a rich family. She would awaken early in the morning and give herself to prayer; and before it was time for work, she would hurry to attend daily Mass. For her, God always came first. During her day of work, amidst trials and tribulations, there was never heard any complaint from her lips.

Her fellow servants became very jealous of her and were mean to her at every opportunity. Because she would not complain to her master, the other servants tormented her even more cruelly. But God greatly rewarded Zita's daily offerings of humility.

Zita died on the 27th of April in the year 1272, being sixty years old. One hundred and fifty miracles that were wrought in behalf of those who had recourse to her intercession have been juridically proved.

Her body was found, whole and entire, in 1580; and it is kept with great respect and is richly enshrined in St. Frediano's Church in Lucca, Italy, next to the Fatinelli house where she worked for forty-eight years. Her face and hands, uncovered, can be viewed through the crystal glass. Pope Leo X granted an office in her honour, and the city of Lucca pays a singular veneration to her memory.

Saint Clare of Montefalco



Born in 1268 into a wealthy family in Montefalco, Italy, Clare was a lively, sincere, and intelligent child. While still very young, she chose Christ as her one true love. Following her elder sister Joan's example, Clare began the demanding practice of religious self-denial; and the two young women spent days in prolonged sessions of prayer and exceptional mortification of the flesh. Clare's parents permitted her to live with Joan in a hermitage not far from their home. In June of the year 1290, this hermitage was declared a monastery to be governed by the Rule of St. Augustine.

Clare was chosen to be the monastery's abbess; and for sixteen years she served as mother, teacher, and spiritual director of her nuns. Soon Clare's reputation for holiness and wisdom attracted many visitors to the monastery. Clare, gifted with the spirit of prophecy and the grace of working miracles, frequently conversed with Our Lord. In 1294, at the age of twenty-six, Clare asked Christ, "Where are You going, Lord?" He answered, "I have been searching the whole world over for a strong place to plant My Cross, but I have found none." Later He told her, "Clare, I have finally found a place for My Cross. I shall place it in your heart." And from that day on, Clare's whole body ached with acute pain. Once she said to her sisters, "If you seek the Cross of Christ, take my heart; there you will find the suffering Lord." By July of the year 1308, Clare's illness had become so severe that she was bedridden. On August 17, after confessing her sins to the monastery chaplain, she died.

After her death her heart was removed from her body; and a cross and the other instruments of Christ's passion were found, clearly imprinted on the cardiac tissue (see picture below). The incorrupt body of St. Clare is preserved together with her heart with the miraculous imprints at the Church of the Holy Cross in Montefalco, Italy.



Saint Agnes of Montepulciano



Agnes was born in 1268; and at the age of nine, she entered the monastery of Montepulciano. Four years later, the pope requested that she assist in establishing a new convent in Procena; and at the age of fifteen, she became the superior of the convent. St. Agnes, blessed with many visions, received the Holy Eucharist from an angel and held the Infant Jesus in her arms. She died in the year 1317, and her body was incorrupt for nearly 300 years. Parts of the remains of her body are now enclosed in a figure, but her visible hands and feet are still incorrupt and can be viewed at the Church of St. Agnes in Montepulciano, Italy.



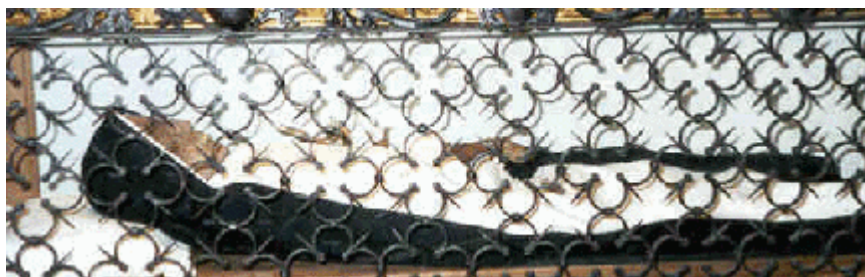
Blessed Margaret of Castello



Blessed Margaret (1287-1320) was born a hunchback, a midget, blind, lame, and unattractive according to the world. When she was six years of age, her proud, noble parents walled her up in a room beside a chapel.

She could not escape, but could attend daily Mass and receive the sacraments.

After fourteen years of imprisonment, she was taken to a shrine by her parents who were hoping for Margaret's cure. But when no cure was forthcoming, they abandoned her. Margaret then became a lay Dominican and spent the rest of her life in prayer and works of mercy. When she died at age thirty-three, the townspeople thronged to her funeral and demanded that "the saint" be buried in a tomb inside the church. The priest protested; but when a crippled girl was miraculously cured at the funeral, the people's demand was granted. Blessed Margaret's body is still incorrupt and lies under the main altar in the Church of St. Domenico at Citta-di-Castello, Italy.



Blessed Imelda Lambertini



Imelda, daughter of Count Egano Lambertini and Castora Galuzzi, was born in the year 1322 at Bologna, Italy. At an early age Imelda's heart was turned toward God. Even though she lived in the days when it was not permitted to receive the Holy Eucharist until the age of fourteen, young Imelda's greatest desire was to receive Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Oh how she longed and longed to receive Our Lord! When Imelda was under ten years old, she begged her father to allow her to enter the Dominican convent; and after much pleading, he finally consented to her desire.

Once in the convent, she again began to plead to receive Communion. Time and time again she received the same disappointment. "No, Sister Imelda, you are too young..." At the convent she took on many odd jobs. She attended the gate for the poor, she scrubbed the floors, and she did all that was asked of her—all for the honor and glory of almighty God.

On the 12th of May in the year 1333, when attending Mass with all of her Sisters, Imelda had the strongest desire to receive Our Lord. At the end of Mass, when all of the Sisters were leaving, they noticed Sister Imelda lovingly gazing toward the locked tabernacle. Some of the nuns looked at Imelda and noticed something white hovering above her. It was a Host.

The nuns immediately notified the priest, who hurriedly came and carefully took the Host out of the air and placed It on a paten. Then he had no choice but to give the Host to Imelda. It was obviously God's Will that she receive her first holy Communion. This first reception also proved to be her last; the rapture with which she received Our Lord was so great that it burst her heart. Imelda sank to the ground, unconscious. And when loving hands upraised her, it was found that she was dead. Blessed Imelda is the Patroness of First Communicants; and her beautifully

incorrupt body can be seen in the Church of St. Sigismund at Bologna,
Italy.



Saint Rita of Cascia



Rita was born in the year 1381. When Rita was fifteen, her parents, against her wishes to become a nun, chose a fiancé for her; and Rita unhappily consented to marriage. Her husband was a cruel and heartless man who often beat her, and their two sons soon learned many of their father's wicked ways. Rita's husband died a violent death but lived long enough to repent before he died, thanks to her fervent prayers. Her two sons died at an early age, but not before they repented and received the Last Sacraments, again thanks to Rita's prayers.

Now that she was free to do with her life what she had always wanted, she became an Augustinian nun. At the age of sixty years old, when she was praying before a Crucifix, a small wound appeared on her forehead as though a thorn from Christ's crown of thorns had penetrated her own flesh. For the last 16 years of her life, Rita bore her external and painful sign of stigmata, her union with Christ. She died on May 22, 1457.

Her body has been beautifully incorrupt for more than five hundred years. Recently the caretakers of her body were forced to lightly wax part of her face, but this did not change the beauty of this great miracle from God.

Her body can be seen in the Basilica of St. Rita in Cascia, Italy.



Saint Catherine of Bologna



St. Catherine of Bologna was born on March 9th in the year 1413. She was born as Catherine de Vigri, the daughter of a diplomatic agent of the Marquis of Ferrara. At the age of eleven, she was appointed "maid of honor" to the daughter of the Marquis and shared in her training and education. When the Marquis' daughter eventually married, she wanted Catherine to remain in her service; but Catherine, at the age of fourteen, left the court and became a Franciscan Tertiary.

Catherine, who had determined to live a life of perfection, was greatly admired for her holiness. Eventually her Community became part of the Poor Clares. She soon began to experience visions of Christ and of Satan and wrote of her experiences, one of which occurred on Christmas day.

Through her efforts with Pope Nicholas V, the Poor Clare convent at Ferrara erected an enclosure; and Catherine was then appointed Superioress. The Community's reputation for its holiness and austerity became widespread, and thus Catherine was later appointed Superioress of a new convent in Bologna.

In Lent of the year 1463, Catherine became seriously ill and died on March 9th. Buried without a coffin, her body was exhumed eighteen days later because of cures attributed to her and because of the sweet scent coming from her grave. Her body was found to be incorrupt and remains so today in the Church of the Poor Clare convent in Bologna. Catherine was canonized in the year 1712. Several years after her death, Catherine appeared to a nun at the convent with the request that her incorrupt body

be placed in a sitting position. Her body has now grown dark due to the lighted candles that once surrounded her body.

Saint Germaine Cousin



Germaine was born in the year 1579 in a tiny French town called Pibrac. From her birth she seemed marked for suffering, having come into the world with a deformed hand and the disease of scrofula. While yet an infant, Germaine lost her mother; but her father soon remarried. Under the pretense of saving the other children from the contagion of scrofula, his second wife persuaded the father to keep Germaine away from the homestead; and thus the child was employed as a shepherdess, making her home in the stable with the animals.

Germaine learned to practice humility and patience and was gifted with a marvelous sense of the presence of God and of spiritual things. To poverty, bodily infirmity, the rigors of the seasons, and the lack of affection from those in her own home, she added voluntary mortifications and austerities, making bread and water her daily food. Because of her great love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, she assisted daily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; and Germaine's flocks, left to the care of Providence while she was away, suffered no harm from the wolves in the forest nearby.

The Rosary was her only book, and her devotion to the Blessed Virgin was so great that Germaine would fall on her knees at the first sound of the Angelus bell. On several occasions when Germaine crossed the river to attend Mass at the village church, the swollen waters opened and afforded her passage without wetting her garments. Her father, at last coming to a sense of duty, forbade his wife to treat Germaine harshly and offered the young shepherdess a place in their home with the other children—an offer Germaine humbly refused. Early one morning in the summer of 1601, her father found that she had not risen at the usual hour. When he went to call her, he discovered her dead body lying on her pallet of vine-twigs; Germaine was dead at the age of twenty-two. She was buried in front of the pulpit in the parish church of Pibrac.

In 1644, when her grave was opened to receive one of her deceased relatives, the body of Germaine was discovered fresh and perfectly preserved. Her body was then exposed for public view until a noble lady presented the church a casket of lead to hold the remains of the young saint. This lady was immediately cured of a serious ailment, this being the first of a long series of wonderful cures wrought at Germaine's relics. The leaden casket was placed in the sacristy; and in 1661 and again in 1700, the remains of this saint were viewed and found to be fresh and intact by the vicars-general of Toulouse. Expert medical evidence declared that the body had not been embalmed, and experimental tests showed that the preservation was not due to any property inherent in the soil. In 1793 a Revolutionary tinsmith and his three accomplices, desecrating Germaine's casket and taking out her remains, buried them in the sacristy and threw quicklime and water on them. Even after the Revolution, Germaine's body was found to be intact except where the quicklime had done its work. Although Satan tried to destroy God's miracle, Germaine's body still remains incorrupt and can be seen in the Church of Pibrac, France.

Saint Vincent De Paul



St. Vincent de Paul was born of a peasant family at Pouy, Gascony, France, in 1580, and worked as a shepherd boy on his father's farm. At a young age Vincent had a great desire to become a priest; and after completing his studies for the priesthood, he was ordained in 1600 and remained in the vicinity of Toulouse, acting as a tutor while continuing his own studies.

Having traveled to Marseilles for an inheritance and sailing home to Toulouse, Vincent was captured by Turkish pirates in the year 1605 and was taken to Tunis. He was maltreated and eventually sold as a slave; but he escaped two years later with his master, a renegade whom he eventually converted to Catholicism. Upon his escape from the Turkish pirates, Vincent immediately dedicated his life to the practice of spiritual

and corporal works of charity. He set up many poor houses for the crippled and sick and personally cared for the patients who had the most contagious diseases. He would dress their wounds and nurse them back to health; indeed there wasn't a poor man that didn't know of Vincent's kindness.

On the 27th of September in the year 1660, Vincent died at the age of eighty, having faithfully served God throughout his whole life. On August 13, 1729, Vincent was declared a Blessed by Benedict XIII; and on June 16, 1737, he was canonized by Clement XII. St. Vincent's bones and heart are perfectly incorrupt and have been placed inside a wax figure of his body. His relics can be seen in the Church of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris.



Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque



Margaret Mary Alacoque was born on the 22nd of July in the year of 1647 at L'Hautecourt, Burgundy, in France. When she was young, Margaret was healed from a crippling disorder by a vision of the Blessed Virgin, which prompted her to give her life to God. In 1671, after receiving a vision of Christ fresh from the Scourging, she was moved to join the Order of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial, France.

Margaret received many revelations from our Lord during her lifetime, and one of these revelations included 12 promises for those who practice a true devotion to His Sacred Heart. The devotion encountered violent opposition, especially in Jansenist areas, but has now become widespread and popular.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque is the patroness of devotees to the Sacred Heart, patron saint of polio patients, and patroness in the case of the loss of parents. Her incorrupt heart and brain have been preserved in a wax and metal figurine of her body and can be seen in the convent chapel of the Order of the Visitation at Paray, France.



Saint Veronica Giuliani



Veronica, named Ursula at her baptism, was born at Mercatello in the Duchy of Urbino, Italy, in the year of 1660. At a young age she showed marvelous signs of sanctity; and when only eighteen months old, she uttered her first words to upbraid a shop man who was serving a false measure of oil, saying distinctly: "Do justice, God sees you." At the age of three years, she began to be favored with Divine communications. And as a young girl, showing great compassion for the poor, she would set apart a portion of her food for them and was even willing to part with her clothes when she met a poor child scantily clad.

When she became of age, her father urged her to marry and found several suitors for her; but Ursula desired to become a nun instead. Because of her father's opposition to her desire to enter a convent, Ursula fell ill and only recovered when he gave his consent. In 1677 she was received into the convent of the Capuchin Poor Clares in Citt` di Castello, taking the name of Veronica in memory of the Passion. At the conclusion of the ceremony of her reception, the bishop said to the abbess: "I commend this new daughter to your special care, for she will one day be a great saint." Veronica became absolutely submissive to the will of her directors, though her novitiate was marked by extraordinary interior trials and temptations to return to the world.

During the time of her temptations and interior trials, Veronica had a vision of Christ bearing His cross and henceforth suffered an acute physical pain in her heart. In 1693 she entered upon a new phase in her spiritual life when she had a vision of the chalice, symbolizing the Divine Passion which was to be re-enacted in her own soul. At first she shrank from accepting this cross, and only by great effort did she eventually submit. She then began to endure intense spiritual and physical suffering.

In 1694 she received the impression of the Crown of Thorns, the wounds being visible and the pain permanent. By order of the bishop she submitted to medical treatment, but obtained no relief.

For thirty-four years she was novice-mistress and guided the novices with great prudence. In 1716 she was elected abbess; and while holding that office, she enlarged the convent. After her death the figure of the cross was found impressed upon her heart. She was canonized in 1839 by Gregory XVI. Her body remains beautifully incorrupt and can be seen at the Monastery of St. Veronica Giuliani in Citt` di Castello, Italy.

Saint Theresa Margaret



Teresa Margaret, born of the noble Redi family in Arezzo in Tuscany, Italy, in 1747, entered the Discalced Carmelites at Florence while she was yet quite young. She was given a special contemplative experience concerning the words of St John, "God is love"; and thus she deeply felt that her vocation was to live a hidden life of love and self-sacrifice. This vocation, confirmed by her heroic exercise of fraternal charity, was soon completed when she died in 1770 at the young age of twenty-three.

Immediately after her death, her body began to decompose. In a very short time her whole complexion had turned to a dreadful green color. The nuns in the convent hurriedly prepared Teresa Margaret's body for

burial; but as they were preparing to put her body into the ground, the green color miraculously was changed to her original skin coloring. She looked as though she had died only seconds before! Her body is still incorrupt and can be seen in the nuns' choir in the Convent of Carmel in Florence, Italy.

Saint Jean Marie Vianney



Jean Marie Vianney was born in France on the 8th of May in the year 1786. His godly mother raised him with the fear and love of the Lord.

Having been raised during the French Revolution, Jean was deeply impressed with the bravery of the Catholic priests that would disguise themselves to give the sacraments to their little flocks. He had a very special devotion to Our Blessed Mother and begged her to one day help him become a priest. As Jean Marie grew in age, his desire to become a priest also grew more and more. Every day Jean and his mother would pray that God would give him the graces to be His servant, and every day the Devil would stand in the way of Jean's future vocation. But in the end, God always triumphs. After many trying studies, Jean Marie Vianney finally became "Father Vianney."

But still, the Devil had to put his filthy paws in the way. Father Vianney was not able to hear confessions because the authorities said that he was too "stupid" to give advice to anyone. Finally, after Jean's many prayers and sacrifices, the authorities gave him permission to perform all of the functions of a priest. And as a priest he could finally save souls by giving them loving but firm guidance in the confessional.

It was soon decided that Father Vianney would be sent to a tiny French town called Ars, a town so small that no one had heard much about it. The new Curé of Ars, Jean Marie Vianney, saved many souls in Ars and won many hardened souls for Christ. People from all over Europe came to Ars just to have him hear their confessions, causing Father Vianney to

frequently spend up to sixteen hours daily in the confessional. For many years Father Vianney toiled for Our Lord with the special aid of his heavenly assistant St. Philomena, working with his God-given gift of performing miracles. Then, on the 4th of August in the year of 1859, God called Jean to Himself. Europe was in mourning, knowing that they had lost one of the best confessors of all time. Jean Marie Vianney's body was exhumed in 1904 and was found to be incorrupt. It is now in the basilica at Ars and can be viewed by the public.

Saint Catherine Laboure



As the evening Angelus bell sounded, Catherine was born of Peter and Louise Laboure on May 2, 1806, the ninth child of a family of eleven. Fifteen minutes after Catherine's birth, her name was entered on the city records. She was baptized on the following day on the feast of the Finding of the True Cross. It surely was God's design that Catherine, a saint who was to be so highly favored by the Blessed Virgin, was born at the ringing of the bell for Our Lady's Angelus.

When Catherine was nine years old, her saintly mother died. After the burial service, little Catherine retired to her room and, standing on a chair, took our Lady's statue from the shelf, kissed it, and said: "Now, dear Lady, you are to be my mother."

When Catherine was very young, she had a vision of St. Vincent de Paul and was thus persuaded to enter a convent. She entered the Daughters of Charity and was a very holy and cheerful nun; all of the sick people loved her company. Sister Catherine was very privileged, having received many apparitions from St. Vincent de Paul and, more importantly, from the Blessed Virgin Mary. One day the Blessed Mother chose to reveal to her a secret—Catherine Laboure's heavenly mission was to create and propagate the Miraculous Medal. When the Mother of God gave Sr. Catherine the instructions for the medal, she said: "Have a medal struck as I have shown you. All who wear it will receive great graces."

Soon people were wearing the medals and miracles began to take place; thus the medal came to be known as the "Miraculous Medal." Many wicked men and women were converted through the graces provided by the Mother of God. In no time at all, Miraculous Medals were propagated everywhere.

Catherine died on the 31st of December in 1876; and when her body was exhumed in 1933, it was found as fresh as it was on the day it was buried. Although she had been in the grave for fifty-seven years, her eyes remained very blue and beautiful; and in death her arms and legs were as supple as if she were asleep. Her incorrupt body is encased in glass beneath the side altar at the chapel of the Daughters of Charity at 140 Rue de Bac in Paris, France, beneath one of the sites where our Lady appeared to her.



Saint Bernadette Soubirous



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Bernadette, born in 1844 of very poor parents in the town of Lourdes, France, spent most of her childhood in poor health. As she grew older, she was very slow at her studies and lost much school time due to severe asthma attacks. On February 11, 1858, when Bernadette was sent with her younger sister and a friend to gather firewood, she saw a very beautiful Lady standing above a rose bush in a grotto at Massabielle. The lovely Lady, dressed in blue and white, smiled at Bernadette and then made the sign of the cross with a rosary of ivory and gold. Bernadette fell on her knees, took out her own rosary, and began to pray. The beautiful Lady was God's Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She appeared to Bernadette during seventeen other apparitions; and during one of the last of these appearances, she instructed Bernadette to go further into the grotto and begin digging in the dirt with her hands. At first nothing happened; but soon the miraculous fountain, now known as the "Fountain of Lourdes," began to flow forth from the ground where Bernadette had dug.

At the age of twenty-two, Bernadette became a Sister of Charity at Nevers, France. Although besieged by many of the faithful, she sought God in the silence of the cloister, serving Him in humility under the vows of her profession as a Sister of Charity. She lived in the convent for thirteen years, spending a large portion of this time ill in the infirmary. When a fellow nun accused her of being a "lazybones," Bernadette said, "My job is to be ill."

Sister Bernadette died on the 16th of April in 1879. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1933, Bernadette was canonized, thus fulfilling the promise that the Blessed Mother had made to her in 1858: "I do not promise to bring you happiness in this world, but in the next."

St. Bernadette's body, which to this day has never corrupted, lies in St. Gildard Convent in Nevers, France. After having been exhumed three times, her body was discovered to have slightly discolored in places; and in 1925 an extremely light wax covering was made for her face and hands.



Saint Maria Mazzarello



Maria Domenica was born on May 9, 1837, in Mornese (Alessandria). When she was young, she developed a solid piety and an outstanding common sense and depth of judgement that would show later in life as Congregational Leader.

At the age of fifteen, she joined the Association of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and began her apostolate among the young people of her village. When Maria was twenty-three, a serious attack of typhoid had a profound spiritual effect on her. The experience of her own physical fragility deepened her abandonment to God and encouraged her to open a sewing school to educate the girls in work, prayer, and love of God.

Thanks to her intense sacramental life and the wise guidance of Fr. Pestarino, Maria made great progress in the spiritual life. On the occasion of Don Bosco's visit to Mornese (October 8, 1864) she said: "Don Bosco is a saint and I feel it." In 1872 Don Bosco chose her to begin the Institute of the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians (the Salesian Sisters).

As Congregational Leader she proved to be a capable teacher of spiritual life, involving other young people in her dedication to the education of women. Maria was cheerful and serene, spreading peace and radiating joy wherever she went.

The Institute developed rapidly. At her death she left her Daughters an educational tradition permeated by Gospel values: "the search for God, Whom we come to know through enlightened catechesis and ardent love, responsibility in work, sincerity and humility, austerity of life and joyful self-giving."

Maria Domenica died in Nizza, Monferrato, on May 14, 1881. Her incorrupt body is venerated in the Basilica of Mary Our Help, in Turin,

Italy. Her feast day is celebrated on May 13th.

Saint John Bosco



John Bosco was born in Becchi, a hillside hamlet near Castelnuovo, Piedmont, Italy, on the 16th of August in the year 1815. When John was barely two years old, his father died and left the support of three boys to the mother, Margaret Bosco. John's early years were spent as a shepherd, and he received his first instruction at the hands of the parish priest. John possessed a ready wit and a retentive memory; and as years passed, his appetite for study grew stronger. Because of the poverty of the home, he was often obliged to turn from his books to the field; however, the desire for the religious training that he had given up never left him.

In 1835 he entered the seminary at Chieri. And after six years of study, on the eve of Trinity Sunday, Don Bosco was ordained priest by Archbishop Franzoni of Turin. Leaving the seminary, Don Bosco went to Turin where he entered zealously upon his priestly labors. It was here that the real field of charity that would be his calling until death opened up to him.

One of his duties was to accompany Don Cafasso upon his visits to the prisons of the city. The children who were confined in these places and abandoned to the most evil influences, with little before them but the gallows, made such an indelible impression upon Don Bosco's mind that he resolved to devote his life to the rescue of these unfortunate outcasts.

On one occasion, when Don Bosco was vesting for Mass, he overheard the sacristan driving away a ragged urchin. Don called the young boy back to the church, and immediately a friendship was struck that would be the first of thousands for Don Bosco. Soon all of the young boys from the village knew that they could find a loving and trusting friend in the good priest. More and more young boys without homes began flocking to Don Bosco's church; and in February of 1842, the "oratory" (as it had come to be called) numbered twenty boys. In March of the same year, the oratory numbered thirty; and in March of the year 1846, four hundred. Don Bosco soon had to find more room for all of these homeless boys and obtained one building after another in an effort to keep them off the street.

God called Don Bosco to Heaven on the 31st of January in the year of 1888. St. John Bosco's incorrupt body lies in the Basilica of Mary Our Help, in Turin, Italy, next to the incorrupt body of St. Maria Mazzarello.

Saint Maria Goretti



Maria Goretti was born on October 16, 1890. Her parents were sharecroppers; and in 1899 they moved to Ferrire, Italy, her father thinking that he had a better chance to find work there. Her father met the Serenelli family and made a deal in which the Goretti family could live with them.

Maria matured quite early, complained seldom, and helped her family daily with chores. Growing in her spirituality as well, Maria was very anxious to receive her First Holy Communion because of her immense love of God. She could only imagine how wonderful it would be to receive Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist!

However, the Serenelli's nineteen-year-old son, Alessandro, had other plans. He cared nothing for God and receiving Holy Communion. He was possessed by the Demon of Lust and wanted to carry out his lustful plans

with Maria. Several times he approached her with his sinful ideas, but every time Maria reprimanded him and told him it is a sin to be impure.

Then one day, July 5th of the year 1902, Alessandro made a sinful decision. On the morning of that fateful day, Maria had been very sick. Even so, she begged her mother to allow her to go to the fields to work.

Maria knew that if she were to remain at home, Alessandro would be alone with her; but her mother insisted that she remain at home to rest.

Poor Maria! She was very frightened but decided that she would be obedient to her mother's wish instead of persisting.

As soon as her family had left, Alessandro, realizing that he and Maria were alone, raced into her room and tried to rape her. Maria resisted, all the while telling him that he was sinning and would surely go to Hell. Alessandro gave up his dirty plans of the rape and instead pulled a long, sharp knife out of his belt and stabbed Maria fourteen times.

She sank to the floor, crying, "Mamma! Mamma!" Alessandro dropped his dagger and fled from the room just before his father entered. Maria was immediately taken to the hospital. She lived for only one hour; but before she died, a priest came and heard her confession. He asked her, "Do you forgive your murderer?" Maria answered, "I forgive him with all of my heart, and I want him to come to heaven!" While gazing at a picture of Our Blessed Mother, Maria soon after expired.

Less than fifty years later, Maria Goretti was declared a saint and martyr. Both Maria's mother and Alessandro, who had completed a thirty-year imprisonment for his crime, attended her canonization. The beautiful, incorrupt body of Saint Maria Goretti has been placed in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Nettuno, Italy.

Some others:

St. Cecilia, born in Rome, died in 177 A.D. at Rome; her body was found incorrupt in 1599. She is known as the first incorrupt saint, and her incorrupt body was found in the position represented by the sculptor.

St. Agatha, born in a prison, died in 250 A.D. at Catania, Sicily. She was martyred by being rolled on coals.

St. John of the Cross, born at Hontoveros, Old Castile, on the 24th of June in the year 1542, died at Ubeda, Andalusia, on the 14th of December, 1591.



Saint Cecilia, VM



St. Agatha, VM



St. John of the Cross

Incorrupt bodies of the Saints -St Charbel Makhlouf -incorruptable



"The Incorruptables" -The incorrupt bodies of certain Saints

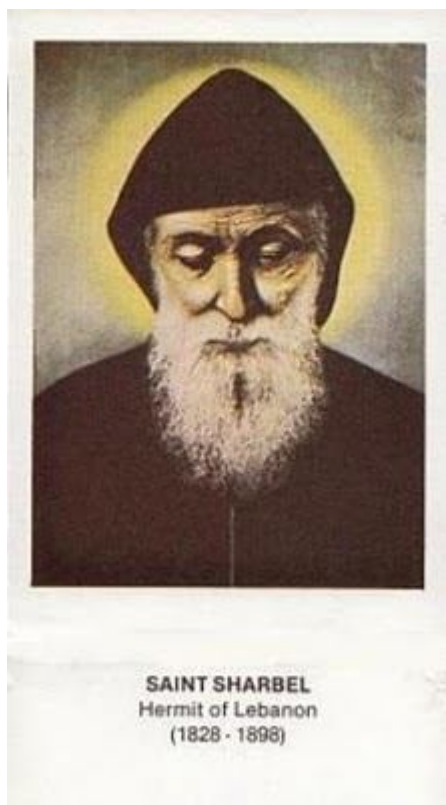
What is perhaps one of the most unusual phenomenon regarding the bodies of Saints is that of the miraculous preservation of a great number of them after being interred for years in conditions that normally should have provoked their destruction according to the laws of nature, and even more so because in almost every case of incorruption in the lives of the Saints the bodies were not embalmed or preserved in any way. Yet in spite of not being embalmed or treated in any fashion, the bodies of "the incorruptables" as they are called, have remained lifelike, flexible and often sweetly scented many years after their death. Many are now displayed under altars in glass-fronted reliquaries, to the admiration and wonder of countless people.

Human remains decompose according to natural laws, and moisture in the body along with the environment of the tomb in which the remains are placed is the primary factors that influence the decomposition of the body. Regardless of these influences, the body will begin decomposition immediately after death, and will continue to decompose in the days, weeks and months afterwards, regardless of the preservation methods (or lack thereof) that are used, although those preserved will normally decompose at a slower rate. Nevertheless decomposition cannot normally be completely inhibited, regardless of the preservation methods used.

Nevertheless, the bodies of numerous Saints have survived decomposition for decades and even centuries. Even more remarkably, there are even a couple of circumstances where the holy remains were subjected not only

to normal conditions of burial, but to the application of quicklime, and even one's whose mutilated body was subjected to torturous conditions which in reality should have hastened the body's destruction.

There are, in fact, several hundred confirmed and documented cases of incorruption in the Catholic church. Many are canonized Saints or Blesseds, however some are simply considered holy persons. Lists of many of these can be found on the internet. What will be presented here is a very recent and well documented case of incorruption that occurred in modern times concerning the holy Catholic monk of the Maronite rite, St. Charbel Makhlouf (1828-1898).



Charbel Makhlouf (sometimes spelled Sharbel) was born on May 8, 1828, in the village of Biqa-Kafra in the high mountains of Northern Lebanon. He was given the name of Joseph at his baptism, and he was the last of the five children born to very poor but religious parents. From early childhood he showed a strong attraction to prayer and solitude, and at age 23 he left home to become a monk in the Monastery of St. Maroun at Annaya. After being received into the novitiate, he was given the name Charbel, the name of an early martyr.

After the usual theological and secular studies, he was ordained a priest on July 23, 1859 and was assigned to the Monastery of St. Maroun, where he spent sixteen years with his fellow brethren, living a communal life of

prayer and devotion to God.

In 1875 he received the permission of his superiors to live alone in a private hermitage named Saints Peter and Paul, which was not far from the monastery, and which was used by the priests during days of quiet personal retreat. It was a rugged and simple cabin, with poor heat and the bare necessities of life. It was in this secluded sanctuary that he spent the remaining twenty-three years of his life in the practice of severe scarifices and mortification. It is recorded by his companions that he often wore a hair shirt, slept on the hard ground, and ate only one meal a day.

During his lifetime he was most notable for his remarkable devotion to the Holy Eucharist and his preference for saying daily Mass at 11:00 a.m., so he could spend almost all the morning in preparation for the Mass, and the rest of the day in thanksgiving afterwards.

After 23 years of daily sacrifice in such a meager existence, in 1898 he suffered a seizure while saying Mass, and a priest assisting at the Holy Sacrifice was forced to pry the Holy Eucharist from his grasp. The holy monk died eight days later on Christmas Eve at the age of seventy. He was buried very simply in the monastery cemetery where so many saintly monks before him had been buried. According to monastic custom, the body, which was not embalmed, was dressed in the full habit of the Order and was placed into the ground without a coffin.

A miraculous light appears above his tomb

Given such a hidden existence, he would most certainly have been forgotten had not a most extraordinary phenomenon occurred at his grave in the form of an extraordinary bright light, which surrounded his tomb for forty-five nights following the interment. Countless local townspeople saw the miraculous light and because of it and the enthusiasm of the many witnesses of this prodigy, the officials of the monastery requested permission from the ecclesiastical authorities to exhume the body four months after the saint's death.

On the day of the exhumation, his grave was opened in the presence of the superiors of the Order, the monks of the monastery, and many villagers, the body was miraculously found in perfect condition to the amazement of everyone, even though, as the result of frequent rains which had inundated the cemetery several times since the burial, the body was found floating on mud in a flooded grave. Given that St Charbel was buried in the ground without a casket and in very wet conditions,

such circumstances certainly should have expedited decomposition.

After being cleansed and reclothed in fresh garments, the body was reverently laid in a wooden coffin and placed in a corner of the private chapel of the monastery for the admiration and contemplation of the monks and the faithful.

Additionally, a remarkable phenomenon accompanied this exhumation; from the pores of the body there exuded a liquid described as perspiration and blood, which had the distinct odor of blood. As a result of this transpiration, the blood-stained clothing upon his person was changed twice a week. Small pieces of this cloth soaked in this mysterious fluid are distributed as relics and these have been said to effect cures.

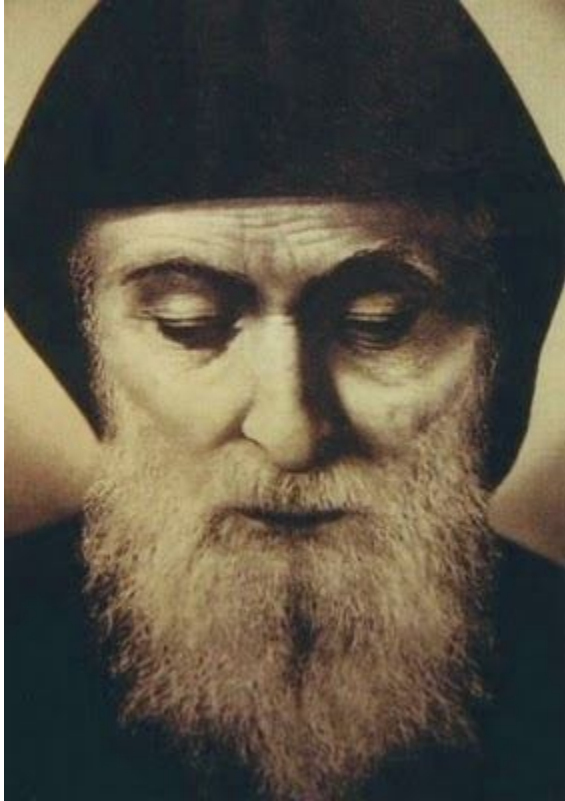
Among the men of medicine who examined the body was Dr. Elias Elonaissi who declared on November 16, 1921:

"I observed that the pores emitted a matter like sweat; a strange and inexplicable thing according to the laws of nature, for this body that has been dead for so many years. I have renewed the same examination many times, at different periods; the phenomenon has always been the same."

Another physician, Dr. George Choukrallah, examined the body a total of 24 times during 17 years and declared:

"I have always been astonished at its state of preservation and especially this reddish liquid exuded by it. .. My personal opinion based on study and experience, is that this body is preserved by a supernatural power."

The phenomenon is more astounding when one considers that in 1918, following a simple autopsy, the body was exposed on the terrace during the heat of summer for three months without the body decomposing and without drying up the source of the fluid.



On July 24, 1927, after the body of Father Charbel was minutely examined by two physicians of the French Medical Institute at Beirut, it was clothed in sacerdotal garments and was placed in a new coffin of wood covered with zinc. Various documents drawn up by the physicians, the Judge of the Ecclesiastical Commission, the Defender of the Faith, a notary and superiors of the Order, were placed in a zinc tube, which was firmly closed and placed beside the body.

Then, after it was sealed with the episcopal crest of the Commission, the coffin was placed in a new tomb especially prepared in the wall of an oratory. The coffin was placed on two stones to prevent contact with the dampness of the soil, and after being carefully sealed with masonry, the tomb was left undisturbed for twenty-three years.

On February 25 of the Holy Year 1950, pilgrims to the shrine noticed a liquid seeping from a corner of the tomb and flowing onto the floor of the oratory. The father superior of the monastery, on examining the liquid and fearing damage to the contents of the tomb, had it opened in the presence of the assembled community. The tomb was found dry and the coffin in the same condition as when it was placed in position, except that a reddish colored liquid was seen dripping through a crack in the foot of the casket.

Permission to examine the contents of the sealed casket was obtained,

and in the presence of many ecclesiastical authorities, officials of the Order and attending physicians, the seal was broken on April 22, 1950. The body was once again found completely free of any trace of corruption and was perfectly flexible and lifelike. The sweat of liquid and blood continued to exude from the body, and the garments were found stained with blood, the white content of the fluid having collected on the body in an almost solidified condition. Part of the chasuble had rotted and the zinc tube containing the official documents was covered with corrosion.

And so it was for 67 years in modern times that the body of Saint Charbel remained perfectly preserved, the case itself be thoroughly documented and examined by medical professionals and described by all accounts as being supernaturally sustained during this 67 year period. For reasons known only to Himself, God chose not to continue the miracle, and at the time of the beatification in 1965, the body was found to have finally complied with the laws of nature. Today, only his bones remain, and these are of a red color, and the discharge of the fluid has ceased.

Blood Miracle of St Januarius-Gennaro An Ongoing Miracle of the Church



The Blood Miracle of Saint Januarius (Gennaro) -*A miracle of the Church that is still occurring today*

The liquefaction (becoming liquid) of the blood of St Januarius (Gennaro) is an extraordinary miracle of the Church that has been occurring up to 18 times each year for the past 600 years. It is only one of a number of blood miracles that have taken place, and in the case of St Januarius-Gennaro and others, are still taking place with blood that was collected soon after the death of certain martyrs. There is a well-documented history of these samples of blood liquefying at various times of the year, especially on the Saints' feast days.

This practice of gathering blood for relics, admittedly a somewhat surprising religious practice, nevertheless was a common practice beginning in the days of persecution when the early Christians soaked cloths in the blood shed by martyrs or, if possible, actually collected the liquid in flasks to keep as devotional items. In the catacombs these flasks were buried with the dead, their discovery indicating that the person had died a martyr. Throughout the centuries, blood has been collected from holy persons recently deceased, especially martyrs for the faith, with the specimens being carefully kept with devotion and veneration. These samples have been known to liquefy under various circumstances, at different seasons of the year, in various countries and in varied ways. Many samples still display wonderful reactions in our day, one of which, that of St Januarius we will here consider.

While it is scientifically known that blood once removed from the body soon coagulates and eventually spoils, and since this natural reaction was

common knowledge among the medical faculty of the Middle Ages, a claim made by them of remarkable liquefactions can hardly be ignored and would seem to indicate a transcendence of their experience. And In our own day, the specimens that are still active are no less scientifically inexplicable than they were centuries ago, even amidst intense scientific investigation.

The best known and most intensely studied is the yearly blood miracle of St. Januarius (St. Gennaro) that occurs in Naples each year. The recurring miracle of the liquefaction of his blood 18 times a year is often reported in the secular as well as the religious press, and is the occasion of great gatherings in the Cathedral of Naples. Here the people pray fervently while the resident cardinal, who usually presides over the ceremony, holds the vials of blood. The miracle occurs when the bust reliquary containing the head of the saint is brought near. When the liquefaction is accomplished in full view of the spectators, the cardinal announces, "The miracle has happened," words that cause great rejoicing and the chanting of the Te Deum.



The saint's history begins with the Roman Emperor Diocletian whose persecution during the dawning years of the fourth century made martyrs of innumerable Christians. Among his victims was counted St. [Januarius, who was serving as bishop of Benevento. The imprisonment of the bishop occurred in A.D. 305 when he journeyed to Pozzuoli to offer encouragement to Sossius, a deacon who had been imprisoned. The bishop was soon arrested together with several ministers who had labored beside the saint in the service of the Church. After their decapitation the bodies were

removed to various cities. St. Januarius' body was taken to Benevento, then to Monte Vergine and lastly to Naples where it was entombed in the main church of the city, with two vials of his blood that had been collected by devout followers. Around this tomb the great ca-the-dral was constructed. Here Januarius was honorably remembered by the faithful of the city.

In the 14th century there occurred a phenomenon that was to attract curiosity throughout the centuries until even today the happenings pro-voke worldwide interest:

The year was 1389. A procession was making its way about the ca-the-dral when the priest holding the flasks containing the saint's coagulated blood noticed that the contents began to liquefy and bubble. Since then the blood has repeated this phenomenon 18 times each year: on the Saturday before the first Sunday in May and the eight days fol-lowing; on the feast of the saint, September 19, and during the octave, and on December 16.

In more recent years the liquefactions and viewings have taken place three times a year: on September 19, the feastday of the Saint; on December 16, which is the anniversary of the eruption of Vesu-vius in 1631; and on the first Sunday in May, which commemorates the translation of the relics to Naples. The blood has failed to liquefy several times, each time coinciding with the outbreak of disease, famine, war or political suppression. It is for this reason that Neapolitans rejoice at each liquefaction.



There are actually four divisions of the saint's relics. The bones are kept separately while the head is enclosed in a magnificent silver bust that is enshrined a distance from the relics of blood. The liquefaction takes place when the vials are brought in close proximity to the silver bust containing the head. The blood is kept in two vials. The smaller contains only a trace of blood, but

the larger measures four inches in height and about two and a quarter inches in diameter and is usually a little more than half filled with coagulated blood that appears as a hard dark mass. The flasks are hermetically sealed and are solidly fixed side by side within a ring of silver and crystal sides that has a sticklike handle at the bottom. The crystals on either side of the ring protect the vials and permit their viewing. This is kept in the main altar of the Chapel of the treasury in the Cathedral of Naples.

On the feast days of the saint the silver bust that contains the head is exposed upon the altar or taken in procession. Prayers are recited while the priest or cardinal holds the reliquary of blood by its handle in full view of the assembly while making certain that the glass is not touched. After an interval of a few minutes or perhaps even an hour, the mass is seen to gradually detach itself from the walls of the flasks and to liquefy, frequently bubbling and frothing. The vials are then brought to the faithful for their veneration. The cathedral is always filled to capacity when the resident cardinal or a priest holds the reliquary for all to see, being careful not to touch the crystal sides. The cardinal then announces, "The miracle has happened," words that cause great joy and the chanting of the 'Te Deum'.

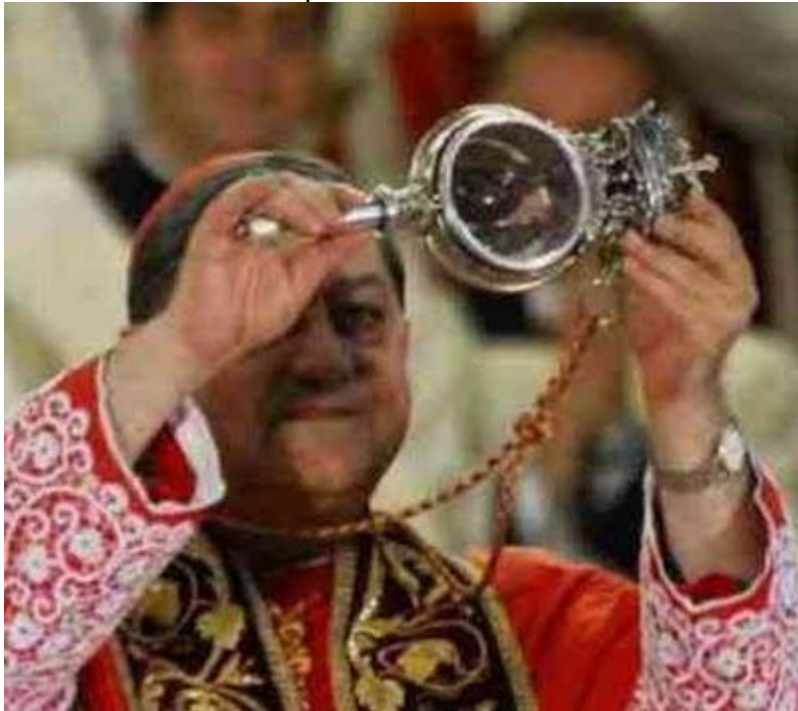
When the liquefactions occur, these dreaded occurrences are not expected to take place, and this gives vent to great rejoicing and notices in many secular presses throughout the world. In the evening the reliquary is put into a silver case and placed inside the altar where the next day the blood might be found coagulated or it may be found in a liquid state and might retain so for days or months.

Every possible argument has been presented by skeptics, but all have been dismissed in view of the contrary reactions of the blood whose liquefaction occurs under the most diverse circumstances and physical conditions. The phenomenon has no need of special conditions to verify itself. For example, the liquefactions occur at different temperatures as indicated by the records kept for more than a century, and by the studies of Professors Pergola, Punzo and Sperindeo who concluded that there is a direct relation between the temperature and the time and manner of liquefaction. The blood may liquefy at temperatures of 77 degrees or higher with the phenomenon taking as much as 20 to 40 minutes, while smaller amount of time may be required when the temperature is 15 or 0 degrees or less.

Those reluctant to admit the supernatural quality of the happening have argued that the press of the spectators, the lights and candles on the altar or the warmth of the priest's hands have helped in producing the heat that encourages liquefaction. Since the miracle occurs several times each year in various seasons, and since the blood is protected by NO layers of

glass and since there is no constant point at which the liquefaction takes place, the miracle is contrary to every physical law that exists regarding the temperature needed to liquefy a substance. Likewise there have been occasions when the blood has failed to liquefy under apparently ideal circumstances. The theory of heat or the lack of it affords no adequate explanation of the phenomenon observed.

After the liquefaction the blood frequently presents a variation in volume since at times it decreased while at other times it almost doubles its size, nor does it necessarily return to its original volume. Sometimes the coagulated blood occupies half the vial while at other times it occupies almost the entire space.



A truly mystifying condition exists with regard to its weight. In experiments conducted in 1902 and 1904 the reliquary was weighed in a delicate balance. It was discovered that its weight was no more constant than its bulk, that is, its weight might increase as much as 25 grams, thereby defying physical laws. The strangest element is that there is often an increase in weight when the mass actually decreases, and a decrease in weight when the volume increases - this in direct opposition to the laws that dictate an increase in weight with a corresponding increase in mass.

The color of the coagulated blood changes from dark rouge, almost black, to a bright vermillion that appears opaque when held to a light. Its viscosity changes as well. Sometimes the mass is almost gummy, at other times fluid, and it is independent of any movement that occurs to the reliquary.

At other times the blood does not entirely liquefy and maintains a hard globule in the middle of the liquefied part, this condition lasting a day,

weeks or sometimes months with no explanation being formulated by scientists for this behavior.

The impossibility of a natural explanation increases by the fact that the substance contained in the vials is true blood. This has been confirmed by the constant tradition and by the documents that are impossible to refute. It is likewise confirmed by scientific research, especially that of 1902 when Professor Sperindeo was permitted to pass spectroscopic beams of light through the liquefied material. This test yielded the distinctive lines of the spectrum of blood with definite characteristics of hemoglobin.

Some of the truly remarkable conditions that scientists could not explain was why the blood sometimes forms tiny bubbles that rise to the surface and collect into a foam, nor why, when it bubbles, it becomes a crimson color while at other times the color of the liquefied material is dull and its movements sluggish.

Skeptical scientists from time to time have attempted to reproduce a liquid with similar characteristics by the mixture of various chemicals, but they have consistently failed to produce something that not only changes from a solid to a liquid form, but also changes its weight, volume and color.



Unable to disqualify the miracle with arguments of a scientific nature, some have grasped elsewhere, even offering the improbable explanation that the blood is affected by some form of psychic force, that concentration and will of the expectant crowd are held responsible producing the physical action that their minds and wills demands is dismissed since the liquefaction has often happened unexpected and in the presence of only a few spectators.

While scientists have been unable to explain how the phenomenon can be accounted for, the mysterious liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius that has occurred for almost 600 years remains a challenge to the

skeptic, a mystery to the scientific, and a truly inspiring miracle to the believer.

On the St Januarius' feast day in 2011 (September 19), the blood again liquified, but this time before the phial was even removed from the reliquary safe where it is kept. After the usual Mass in honor of Saint Januarius on his feastday, Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe of Naples removed the phial of the saint's blood from the safe, and to his surprise he discovered that the blood had already liquified, and he immediately announced to the congregation "*Saint Januarius has listened to our prayers,*" which drew a sustained applause from the crowd gathered in the cathedral.

For those interested, there is an excellent brief eyewitness account from Father Alexander Lucie-Smith entitled "The day I saw a Saints blood become liquid". On that day back in 2001 Father Alexander relates how the blood prodigy only occurred after much praying from the assembled congregation, and how the change was almost instantaneous.

The Miraculous Medal & the apparition of the Virgin Mary to St Catherine Laboure



St Catherine Laboure and the story of the Miraculous Medal

When the Virgin Mary and Her Blessed Son were born into the world, the world had almost no knowledge of their coming, nor of the new covenant between God and man that they heralded. It was much the same in 1806 when Catherine Laboure, the visionary of the Miraculous Medal, was born. She was a country farm girl, hidden in a pocket of the Burgundian hills in France. Certainly the brilliant skeptical world of Voltaire and the proud world of Napoleon Bonaparte would have snubbed her. Yet she heralded a

new Marian era that begun what many call the Age of Mary.

Catherine Laboure was born on May 2, 1806 in the tiny village of Fain-les-moutiers, France, not far from Dijon. Her father, Pierre La-boure, owned the largest farm in the village and was an educated man, having studied for the priesthood in his youth. Her mother, Madeleine Louise Gontard, was a former school mis-tress, whose family was well respected. Catherine was the ninth of eleven children and during her adolescence her younger sister Marie Antoinette, or "Tonine", was her close companion.

While Tonine was the friend and confidante of her childhood and adolescence, Catherine's mother was the source of her sanctity and spitual devotion, for Madame La-boure took pains to instill in her a special love of God and to lead her in the ways of holiness. Sadly her beloved mother died when Catherine was only nine years old. In the midst of her terrible grief at her mother's passing, Catherine turned to Our Lady. Climbing up on a chair, she reached for a statue of the Blessed Virgin that stood high on a shelf in her mother's bed-room, clasped it to her breast, and said aloud:

"Now, dear Blessed Mother, you will be my mother."

The fact that Catherine meant what she said is very evident from the deepening of her spiritual life and ever increasing devotion to Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. During the next two years, she and Tonine lived with a kindly aunt, Marguerite Jeanror, her father's sister, in the nearby village of Saint-Remy. Catherine was pleased to discover that Saint Remy had a resident priest, which is something that her hometown did not have, and for the first time in her life Catherine was given an organized course of instruction in Catholic doctrine and guidance in cultivating the spiritual virtues. It was the only formal education she was ever to receive, a strange and mysterious thing, for she came of educated parents and her brothers and sisters all had more advanced schooling in varying degrees. And so it is hard not to see here design of heaven to keep Catherine ignorant, so that the divine origin of her visions might be the more apparent.

At Saint Remy, Catherine began to prepare for her first Communion and to withdraw more and more from the playful life of childhood into a solemnity beyond her years. "She had no interest in games," was the way Tonine put it; and again: "From the time of her first Communion, she became entirely mystic."

Eventually Catherine's father asked her and Tonine to come home, and he turned over to Catherine the running of his household. It was a tremendous task because in addition to her father, there were three brothers and a sister still at home for Catherine to care for, and one of

these, the youngest, was an invalid, who required constant nursing. Also, there were fourteen hired men, whose dinner must be carried to them in the fields. And in addition to the cooking and cleaning there was the laundry and sewing. All of this meant for very long days, going late to bed and early to rise for little Catherine, who was at this time only a young teenager.

Amidst all her housework she made time for her spiritual life. Each morning Catherine walked some six miles in the predawn darkness to Mass. Throughout the day she managed to slip away to the village chapel across the lane from her home; there her favorite devotion was to kneel in prayer before a old painting of the Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Her First Known Mystical Experience

At the age of eighteen Catherine had her first mystical experience. It was in the form of a dream, wherein she found herself assisting at the Mass of an old priest, who was a stranger to her. At the end of Mass he turned and beckoned to her, but she fled in fright. Then, in her dream, Catherine went to visit a sick neighbor, only to encounter the same venerable priest. As she turned to flee from him the second time, he called after her:

"You do well to visit the sick, my child. You flee from me now, but one day you will be glad to come to me. Remember that God has plans for you."

Catherine was not to know the meaning of this dream until four years later.

In the meantime she began to clear the way toward a religious vocation by training Tonine to take over the household. Catherine refused at least three proposals of marriage, only to meet with a flat "no" from her father when she asked his permission to enter religion. In fact he took steps to prevent her from becoming a nun by sending her to Paris to serve as a waitress in her brother's cafe, with the thought that the allurements of the city might distract her from her religious intentions. After a year of living in the city, Catherine was disappointed with this type of life, and with the help of her brothers and sisters she went to study at a "finishing" school conducted by a sister-in-law at Chatillon.

Her call to religious life

Unfortunately Catherine was forced to endure the ridicule of her schoolmates, for her ignorance and lack of education was truly apparent. In spite of private tutoring from her sister-in-law, Catherine learned very slowly, for she really had no interest in the world or its learning. This town of Chatillon, however, was to remain blessed in her memory, for in this ancient town she found her vocation, for it was in the visitor's parlor of the Hospital de Saint-Sauveur in Chatillon that Catherine recognized

the old priest of her dream in a portrait of St. Vincent de Paul and knew then that God meant her to be a Sister of Charity [St Vincent de Paul was the founder of the Sisters of Charity.]

Although Catherine's calling was now crystal-clear, nevertheless, she had serious obstacles to overcome before she would be free to follow that calling. First, there was her father. By this time, Catherine was twenty-three years old and did not need her father's permission to enter religion, but obedience was the soul of her spiritual life, and she felt that her obedience would not be perfect, should she not have his blessing. Her sister-in-law, Jeanne Laboure, came to her assistance. Jeanne was a favorite with Catherine's father and she knew how to bend him to her will.

Soon he gave in and sent Catherine the blessing she so desperately wanted, but, in doing so, he thrust one final arrow into her heart. He refused her the dowry customarily required of those entering the Convent. It was a foolish thing to do, for it only served to humiliate the daughter who had served him so well, and to reveal his own lack of charity. Once again here Catherine showed her virtue by never uttering a word of criticism or complaint--in fact, all her life she spoke of her father in the most glowing terms. Jeanne and her husband, Catherine's brother Hubert, supplied the dowry and the trousseau Catherine would need for her novitiate.



Now the second obstacle to Catherine's vocation was even more difficult to surmount. The Sister Superior of the hospital at Chatillon was most reluctant to receive a religious candidate so poorly educated as Catherine. Once more, Catherine found a champion,

this time in the person of the Sister Assistant of the house, Sister Victoire Sejole, Catherine had been accompanying Sister Sejole on her errands of mercy, and the good Sister, who had an extraordinary faculty for discerning souls, had come to recognize in her an unusual depth of spirituality. She begged the Superior to accept the girl, pointing out that Catherine was "a good village girl, the kind St. Vincent loved," and promising to instruct her personally in the basics of learning that she would need in the convent. The Sister Superior acquiesced, and Catherine was now about to begin the life with Jesus that she had so desired.

Catherine is given visions of the heart of St Vincent de Paul
Catherine entered the Sisters of Charity as a postulant at Chatillon on January 22, 1830, and in the short three months that she spent there left an unforgettable impression of goodness. On April 21, 1830, she entered the novitiate, or seminary, as the Sisters of Charity call it, at 140 rue du Bac in Paris. She arrived just in time to assist at the translation of the body of St. Vincent de Paul from the Cathedral of Notre Dame to the newly erected mother church of the Vincentian Fathers. A novena of thanks-giving was held at the church to celebrate this great event, and each evening, on returning home, Catherine was granted a vision of St. Vincent's heart.

Catherine is given visions of the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist
These visions were truly a prelude to the great apparitions of Our Lady soon to come. They were the first of a train of miraculous favors Catherine was to receive all her life. Soon afterwards came a vision of Jesus Christ truly present in the Holy Eucharist. This extraordinary favor was frequent in that it was given to her every time she entered the chapel during the nine months of her novitiate; and there are certain indications that it may have continued from time to time during her entire life. The vision took a special form on Trinity Sunday, June 6, 1830, when Our Lord appeared to Catherine during Mass, robed as a king. At the reading of the Gospel the symbols of his kingship fell to the ground, and Catherine understood in her heart that the King of France, Charles X, would soon be overthrown, which happened in fact on August 2, 1830, only 2 months after the vision. The purpose of this vision, with its realization in real life of the prophecy contained, was to strengthen Catherine's faith in the authenticity of the visions that she was given, and to be one of the many proofs of the heavenly origins of her visions.

The Virgin Mary appears to Catherine for the first time
Soon the great apparitions of Our Lady began. Catherine has given us three complete accounts of them, written in her own hand at three distinct periods of her life. These accounts have such an indefinable charm, compounded of the accuracy of the eyewitness, the simplicity of the peasant, the eye for details of the woman, that it would be foolish not to let Catherine tell her marvelous story in her own words:

"On the eve of the feast of St. Vincent, good Mother Martha spoke to us of devotion to the saints, and to the Blessed Virgin in particular. It gave me so great a desire to see her that I went to bed with the thought that I would see my good Mother that very night-it was a desire I had long cherished.

"We had been given a piece of a surplice of St. Vincent's. I tore my piece in half, swallowed it, and fell asleep, confident that St. Vincent would obtain for me the grace of seeing the Blessed Virgin.

"At eleven-thirty, I heard someone calling my name: " 'Sister, Sister, Sister!'

"Wide awake, I looked in the direction of the voice. Drawing the bed-curtains, I saw a child clothed in white, some four or five years old, who said to me:

" 'Come to the chapel; get up quickly and come to the chapel: the Blessed Virgin is waiting for you there.'

"At once the thought struck me: Someone will hear me.

"The child answered:

" 'Do not be afraid. It is eleven-thirty; everyone is asleep. Come, I am waiting for you.'

"He followed me, or rather I followed him; he kept to my left, and was surrounded with rays of light. Wherever we went, the lights were lit, a fact which astonished me very much. But my surprise was greatest at the threshold of the chapel: the door opened of itself, the child scarcely having touched it with the tip of his finger. It was the height of everything, to see that all the torches and tapers were burning-it reminded me of midnight Mass. I did not see the Blessed Virgin. The child led me into the sanctuary, to the side of M. le Directeur's chair. There he remained the whole time.

"Since the time seemed long, I looked to see whether the watchers were passing by the tribunes. [Sisters who remained on duty at night.] Finally the hour came; the child announced it to me, saying:

" 'Here is the Blessed Virgin; here she is.'

"I heard a noise like the rustling of a silk dress, which came from the direction of the tribune near the picture of St. Joseph; a lady was seating herself in a chair on the altar steps at the Gospel side--just like St. Anne, only it was not the face of St. Anne.' [Catherine is referring here to a picture of St. Anne seated in a chair, which hung in the sanctuary; Our Lady's attitude reminded her of this picture]

"I doubted whether it was the Blessed Virgin. Again the child, who stood by, the whole time, said to me:

" 'This is the Blessed Virgin.'

"It would be impossible for me to describe what I felt at that moment, or what passed within me, for it seemed to me that I could not possibly look upon the Blessed Virgin.

"It was then that the child spoke, no longer as a child, but as a grown man, and in the strongest terms." [Catherine explained elsewhere that the child suddenly assumed a man's voice and sternly admonished her for doubting that it was really the Blessed Virgin.]

"Looking upon the Blessed Virgin, I flung myself toward her, and falling upon my knees on the altar steps, I rested my hands in her lap. There a moment passed, the sweetest of my life. I could not say what I felt. The Blessed Virgin told me how I must conduct myself with my director, and added several things that I must not tell. As to what I should do in time of trouble, she pointed with her left hand to the foot of the altar, and told me to come there and to open up my heart, assuring me that I would receive all the consolation I needed.

"I asked her the meaning of everything I had seen, and she deigned to explain it to me. I could not say how long I stayed with her. When she left, it was as if she faded away, becoming a shadow which moved toward the tribune, the way she had come.

I got up from the steps of the altar and saw that the child was where I had left him. He said:

" 'she is gone . . .'

"We went back the same way, always surrounded with light, the child still keeping to the left. I believe that this child was my guardian angel, who showed himself that he might take me to see the Blessed Virgin, for I had often prayed to him to obtain this favor for me. He was dressed in white, and shone with a mysterious light that was more resplendent than light itself; he appeared to be four or five years old.

Having returned to my bed, I heard two o'clock strike. I slept no more that night."

Catherine appended to this over-all account the actual words spoken by Our Lady during this interview. With her usual precision, she entitled it: July Conversation with the Most Blessed Virgin, from 11:30 in the evening of the 18th until 1:30 in the morning of the 19th, St. Vincent's de Paul's feast day.

"My child, the good God wishes to charge you with a mission. You will have much to suffer, but you will rise above these sufferings by reflecting that what you do is for the glory of God. You will know what the good God wants. You will be tormented until you have told him who is charged with directing you. You will be contradicted but, do not fear, you will have grace. Tell with confidence all that passes within you; tell it with simplicity. Have confidence. Do not be afraid.

"You will see certain things; give an account of what you see and hear. You will be inspired in your prayers: give an account of what I tell you and of what you will understand in your prayers.

"The times are very evil. Sorrows will befall France; the throne will be overturned. The whole world will be plunged into every kind of misery. (In saying this, the Blessed Virgin appeared very distressed.) But come to the foot of the altar. There graces will be shed upon all, great and small, who ask for them. Especially will graces be shed upon those who ask for them.

"My child, I particularly love to shed graces upon your Community; I love it very much. It pains me that there are great abuses in regularity, that the rules are not observed, that there is much relaxation in the two Communities.' [The Vincentian Fathers form a Double Family with the Sisters of Charity; both have the same superior general. When Our Lady visited St. Catherine, the Communities of St. Vincent were passing through the painful days of reorganization that followed the French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte.]

"Tell that to him who has charge of you, even though he is not the superior. He will be given charge of the Community in a special way; he must do everything he can to restore the rule in vigor. Tell him for me to guard against useless reading, loss of time, and visits. When the rule will have been restored in vigor, a community will ask to be united to your Community. Such is not customary, but I love them; God will bless those who take them in; they will enjoy great peace.' [Our Lady spoke of Mother Seton's Sisters from Emmitsburg, Maryland, who petitioned for union with St. Vincent's Community, and were admitted in 1849].

"The Community will enjoy a great peace; it will become large.' But, there will be an abundance of sorrows, and the danger will be great. Yet, do not be afraid; tell them not to be afraid. The protection of God will be ever present in a special way-and St. Vincent will protect you. (Now the Blessed Virgin was very sad.) I shall be with you myself. I always have my eye upon you. I will grant you many graces. The moment will come when the danger will be extreme. It will seem that all is lost. At that time, I will be with you. Have confidence. You will recognize my coming and the protection of God over the Community, the protection of St. Vincent over both Communities. Have confidence; do not be discouraged; I will be with

you then.

"But it will not be the same for other communities-there will be victims (the Blessed Virgin had tears in her eyes when she said it)among the clergy of Paris there will be victims-Monseigneur the Archbishop-(at this name the tears came afresh).

"My child, the cross will be treated with contempt; they will hurl it to the ground. Blood will flow; they will open up again the side of Our Lord. The streets will run with blood. Monseigneur the Archbishop will be stripped of his garments. (Here the Blessed Virgin could no longer speak; her anguish was depicted in her face.) My child, (she told me) the whole world will be in sadness. (At these words I wondered to myself when this would be, and I understood clearly, forty years.)"

Like the apparitions of St. Vincent's heart, this apparition was a prelude to the great apparition of the Miraculous Medal which would soon happen on November 27. Catherine is to be entrusted with a mission, but she is not yet told what that mission will be. Our Lady does, however, foretell the dire happenings to befall France and the world in 1870, that year of turmoil and upheaval. There is some reason to believe that her predictions were not meant to apply only to the year 1870, for, during the revolution of 1830, which erupted just a week after this apparition, and during the revolution of 1848, these predictions were fulfilled at least in part. It is an especially striking fact that, although Archbishop Darboy was murdered in 1870, as Our Lady had foretold, so too, Archbishop Affre was shot to death on the barricades in 1848, and Archbishop de Quelen had twice to flee for his life during the "Glorious Three Days" of the revolution of 1830.

The fulfillment of these terrible prophecies of the Mother of God may be considered in a practical way as one of the many proofs of the authenticity of the visions. They may be also looked upon as hints of even more horrible punishments to befall mankind, such as World Wars I and II, for which the "mission" to be entrusted to Catherine would be in the form of a remedy for what is lacking by much of mankind.

The second apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In this first apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Catherine was left completely in the dark as to the nature of her mission. Four months were to pass before heaven revealed its plans to her, which we offer again in Catherine's own words:

"On November 27, 1830, which fell upon the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent, at five-thirty in the evening, in the deep silence after the point of the meditation had been read-that is, several minutes after the point of the meditations--I heard a sound like the rustling of a silk dress, from the tribune near the picture of St. Joseph. Turning in that

direction, I saw the Blessed Virgin, at the level of St. Joseph's picture. The Virgin was standing. She was of medium height, and clothed all in white. Her dress was of the whiteness of the dawn made in the style called "a la Vierge," that is, high neck and plain sleeves. A white veil covered her head and fell on either side to her feet. Under the veil her hair, in coils, was bound with a fillet ornamented with lace, about three centimeters in height or of two fingers' breadth, without pleats, and resting lightly on the hair.



"Her face was sufficiently exposed, indeed exposed very well, and so beautiful that it seems to me impossible to express her ravishing beauty. Her feet rested on a white globe, that is to say half a globe, or at least I saw only half. There was also a serpent, green in color with yellow spots.

"The hands were raised to the height of the stomach and held, in a very relaxed manner and as if offering it to God, a golden ball surmounted with a little golden cross, which represented the world. Her eyes were now raised to heaven, now lowered. Her face was of such beauty that I could not describe it.

"All at once I saw rings on her fingers, three rings to each finger, the largest one near the base of the finger, one of medium size in the middle, the smallest one at the tip. Each ring was set with gems, some more beautiful than others; the larger gems emitted greater rays and the smaller gems, smaller rays; the rays bursting from all sides flooded the base, so that I could no longer see the feet of the Blessed Virgin.



"At this moment, while I was contemplating her, the Blessed Virgin lowered her eyes and looked at me. I heard a voice speaking these words: "This ball that you see represents the whole world, especially France, and each person in particular.'

"I could not express what I felt at this, what I saw, the beauty and the brilliance of the dazzling rays.

" 'They are the symbols of the graces I shed upon those who ask for them.'

"This made me realize how right it was to pray to the Blessed Virgin and how generous she was to those who did pray to her, what graces she gave to those who asked for them, what joy she had in giving them.

" 'The gems from which rays do not fall are the graces for which souls forget to ask,' (continued the voice). [This sentence is a supplement to the descriptive paragraph above concerning the rings, gems, and rays. Catherine does not mention in the former paragraph that some of the gems emitted no rays whatever]

"At this moment, I was so overjoyed that I no longer knew where I was. A frame, slightly oval in shape, formed round the Blessed Virgin. Within it was written in letters of gold:

" 'O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to Thee.'

"The inscription, in a semi-circle, began at the height of the right hand, passed over the head, and finished at the height of the left hand.



"The golden ball disappeared in the brilliance of the sheaves of light bursting from all sides; the hands turned out and the arms were bent down under the weight of the treasures of grace obtained.

"Then the voice said:

" 'Have a Medal struck after this model. All who wear it will receive great graces; they should wear it around the neck. Graces will abound for those who wear it with confidence.'

"At this instant the tableau seemed to me to turn, and I beheld the reverse of the Medal: a large M surmounted by a bar and a cross; beneath the M were the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, the one crowned with thorns, the other pierced with a sword."

Within minutes after the vision had disappeared from her sight, "like a candle blown out," as Catherine put it, there began for the humble Sister the lifelong task of guarding her identity. Catherine understood from the Mother of God that, in giving the Medal to the world, she herself was to remain unknown. So completely caught up in the glorious experience was she that she had no recollection of leaving the chapel and going down to the refectory for supper; she was brought back to earth by the voice of the mistress of novices speaking in sarcasm:

"Sister Laboure must still be in ecstasy." Yet this Sister spoke more truly than she realised!

In the years that followed, Catherine Laboure became very adept at hiding her great secret, and the ways of community living were her greatest ally. Because of community routine she lived a life that was, on the surface, no different than the lives of the Sisters around her. Even while enjoying the most remarkable favors of heaven, she never missed a duty or an exercise of her religious rule. While devotion to the "Miraculous Medal" became more and more popular, no one knew who the visionary of the Virgin Mary was. Sister Sejole suspected that Catherine was the Seer of the Medal, but others did not think so. The curious sometimes turned attention to Sister Catherine Laboure, but she was always able to turn aside the guesses and conjectures.

There can be little doubt that she received supernatural help in keeping her secret. This was especially evident when, in 1836, the Archbishop of Paris urged Catherine's confessor Father Aladel to have her come forward and testify in person at the first official inquiry into the origin of the Medal. After Catherine had repeatedly tried to avoid testifying, with evident reluctance and anguish, she finally came up with the astonishing statement that it would do no good for her to testify anyway, for she could remember no detail of the apparitions! And the fact that this was no pure invention on her part was proven by at least two more well-authenticated periods of forgetfulness at other intervals in her life. God, it seems, intervened in her favor and drew a curtain over her memory during a few periods of time, to keep her humble and in the background.



After these days of intense mystical graces Catherine spent the remaining forty-six years of her life in complete obscurity at the

Hospice d'Enghien in the environs of Paris, first as cook, then as laundress and custodian of the clothes room, and finally, for forty years, in charge of the old men who were inmates of the house. It was a singularly humdrum life, without glamour, or even much of human gratitude. The ordinariness of it obscured even her heroic sanctity, so that none of Catherine's Sisters, except in hindsight, regarded her as more than a good and regular religious. There were certain moments when the glory shone through--as on the morning when her Sisters discovered her in ecstasy before a statue of the Virgin in the garden, or when she made some passing prediction that inevitably came true--however these were but momentary, and everyone quickly forgot them. Beneath the veneer of daily religious life, Catherine Laboure was deeply involved in the practice of heroic virtue and devotion to God.

It was only in 1876, a scant six months before her death, that the secret greatness of Catherine was finally revealed. Our Lady had asked for the erection of a statue depicting her in the attitude of the first phase of the Apparition of November 27, as the "Virgin of the Globe," and the statue had not been made. Fearing to appear before Mary Immaculate without every last detail of her mission accomplished, Catherine broke her long silence in order that it might be done.

Father Aladel had died in 1865 and had been succeeded as Catherine's confessor by Father Chinchon. For reasons that can only be guessed, neither of these men had seen to the making of the statue. Now Father Chinchon was suddenly sent to a distant house, and Catherine, who knew supernaturally that she had but a few months to live, found herself bereft of her trusted confidant. In panic she rejected the idea of confiding in her new confessor, and went directly to the Superior General, to beg him to restore Father Chinchon as her confessor. Whether or not she meant to reveal herself to the General as the Sister of the Apparitions, we shall never know, for she grew confused in his presence and was able only to stammer her startling request. To the General, therefore, she seemed to be just an old nun. Gently but firmly he refused her request.

Catherine went home in tears. The Sister Superior gaped at her in astonishment, for she had never seen her upset before. When she asked Catherine what was the matter, Catherine suddenly grew calm and answered:

"Since I have not much longer to live, I feel that the time to speak out has come. But, as the Blessed Virgin told me to speak only to my confessor, I shall say nothing to you until I have asked Our Lady's permission in prayer. If she tells me I may speak to you, I will do so; otherwise I will remain silent."

The next morning, having secured the permission of the Mother of God,

Catherine summoned her Superior, revealed herself as the Seer of the Apparitions, and begged that plans be set on foot for the making of the statue of the "Virgin of the Globe." Before her death she was to see the plaster model in the studio of the sculptor.

Catherine died peacefully on December 31, 1876. Pope Pius XI beatified her in 1933, and Pope Pius XII raised her to the honors of the altar in



1947. Her incorrupt body lies beneath an altar built on the spot where Our Lady appeared to her; above the altar is the statue, the making of which had caused her such anguish.

The great apparition of November 27, 1830, in which the Miraculous Medal was given to the world, must be considered under two broad aspects: first of all, theologically, and then, as a message to mankind.

The prominent theological doctrine of the apparition is, of course, the Immaculate Conception. The proper name of the Medal is the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, and it was so called from the beginning until the people themselves, pleased with the wonders it worked, called it the Miraculous Medal. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is symbolically portrayed in the representation of Mary crushing the head of the serpent, a reference to Genesis 3:15, "*I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*"

The doctrine is specifically mentioned in the golden letters which formed round the Virgin: "O Mary, conceived without sin ... "

There can be no doubt that the apparition of the Medal hastened the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It was indeed the "great sign" that "appeared in the heavens," an indication that the time was ripe for the vindication of Mary's glorious privilege. Pius IX himself asserted that the impetus for his pronouncement came from France. Archbishop de Quelen of Paris, who approved the making of the Medal and later confirmed the authenticity of the vision, had no small part in this impetus. In 1836 he dedicated his archdiocese to the Immaculate Conception, and it was through his urging that the title "Queen conceived without sin" was added to the Litany of Loreto. The apparition of the

Medal, therefore, bears a significant relation to the apparitions at Lourdes. It is noteworthy that Bernadette was wearing a medallion that bore on its face the front of the Miraculous Medal when Our Lady appeared to her, and that she described the attitude of the Virgin, making a gracious, sweeping gesture with her arms, "just the way she appears on the Miraculous Medal."

The first phase of the apparition, popularly referred to as the "Virgin of the Globe," however, is concerned with the doctrine which describes Mary as the Mediatrix of all graces. Briefly, this doctrine, which is not yet defined by the Church but which is considered certain by theologians, states that all prayers and petitions, whether addressed specifically to Mary, or to God and the saints, are presented to God by her, and all graces, whether answers to prayer or gifts unsought, pass through her hands to mankind. This doctrine is admirably represented by the attitude of the Mother of God offering the golden ball which represents the world, to God, her lips moving in prayer-this is the intercessory office of Our Lady-and by the brilliant rays streaming from the rings on her hands, symbolic of the actual bestowal of the graces obtained.



This doctrine is also expressed in a general way in Our Lady's explanation of the dazzling rays: "They are the symbols of the graces I shed upon those who ask for them."

In the second phase of the apparition this doctrine of the mediation of Mary continues to be expressed in the rays falling from the outstretched hands "bent down under the weight of the treasures of grace obtained," and the golden words: "O' Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who

have recourse to Thee."

On the back of the Medal there is obvious reference to Our Lady's part as Co-redemptress of the human race symbolised in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, "the one crowned with thorns, the other pierced with a sword," and in the M surmounted by a cross, which is plainly a representation of Mary beneath the Cross of her Son. Our Lady herself considered the back of the Medal to be readily understandable, for when Catherine, at the request of her confessor, Father Aladel, asked what words should be inscribed there, the Virgin replied: "The M and the two hearts express enough."

The twelve stars on the Medal, which Catherine does not mention in any written account of the vision, but which she described to her confessor by word of mouth, refer to the text from the Apocalypse, 12:1, "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

The Medal received liturgical approbation when a Mass and Office were assigned in its honor at the direction of Aloisi Cardinal Masella, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in 1895. It is one of only three sacramentals in the history of the Church to be thus liturgically honored, sharing its distinction with the Rosary and the Brown Scapular.



As a message to mankind, the meaning of the Miraculous Medal apparition is thoroughly clear. The approach of Our Lady is personal to each human soul. she is concerned, not with mankind in general, but with each individual. "This ball represents the whole world, especially France, and each person in particular." The Medal

to be struck will be a personal link between Our Lady and each person who wears it. She does not call for pilgrimages, nor for the building of a shrine. This tiny Medal is to be her shrine, and her devotees are to carry it always about their necks. "Grace will abound for those who wear it with confidence."

It was and is the fulfillment of this promise, the abundance of graces, that quickly endeared the Medal to the world. The spread of the Medal was so rapid and the flood of favors it let loose so startling, that the faithful gave it the name "Miraculous." The number of Medals minted since 1832, when it was first struck, is beyond all counting. It is easily in the hundreds of millions. The Medal is worn by Protestant and Jew as well as Catholic.

The wonders it works are as ordinary or as extraordinary as the needs and ills of mankind. Conversions to the Faith, repentance of hardened sinners, recognition of the Will of God, peace in homes, recoveries from illness acute and chronic, critical and minor—the catalogue is end-less. Each wearer of the Medal has his own story to tell. Best of all, the Medal seems to have a special power for promoting and deepening personal devotion to the Mother of God. Thus it has not merely a passing or momentary effect on the soul it touches, but an effect which is so lasting as to be, in many cases, eternal. Under this aspect, it has assumed a mighty role in the reconversion of the world, for it betters the individual soul, and the world's goodness is exactly equal to the sum of all good hearts.

Catherine Laboure is the perfect model of what Our Lady intended the Medal to do for mankind. As already stated, the Miraculous Medal is meant to sanctify those who wear it. Catherine Laboure is not a saint because she saw the Blessed Virgin, but because she cultivated devotion to her and allowed this devotion to influence her way of life. In so doing, she realized perfectly Our Lady's objective: not the performance of heroic, or even unusual, deeds by her clients, but the perfection of their ordinary states of life.

Catherine's formula was very simple: she did what she was supposed to do; she did it as well as she could; and she did it for God. It is a formula that everyone can, and should, follow. No one pretends that it is easy; the pursuit of virtue entails self-discipline and sacrifice: but it is attainable.

The sanctity of Catherine Laboure is proof. She is, therefore, the "Saint of Ordinary People," a flesh-and-blood rendering of the message of Mary to mankind through the Apparitions of the Miraculous Medal, a model for the salvation of the modern world. Mary Immaculate did not specifically ask for any set form of devotion beyond the wearing of the Medal. Therefore one must come to the conclusion that the medal itself provides the

inspiration for devotion, for the medal is a lesson unto itself of the depth of love that we are to have for Jesus and Mary.

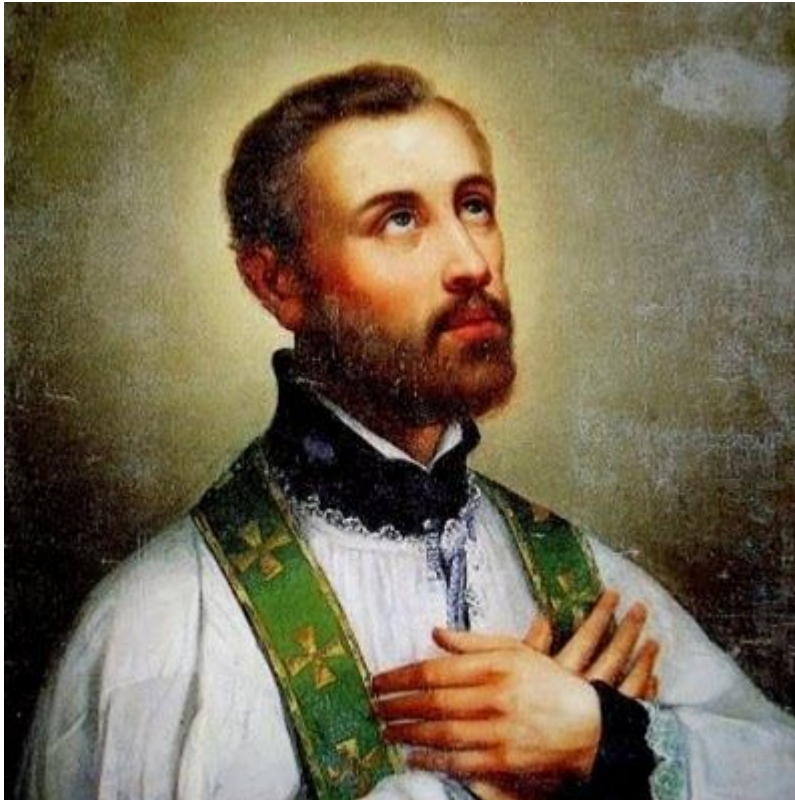
Raised from the dead -Saints who brought people back to life



Saints Who Raised The Dead

The book *"Saints Who Raised The Dead"* by Father Albert J. Hebert documents true stories of 400 resurrection miracles in the lives of the Saints. Jesus says to His apostles in the Gospel of John: *"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it."* (John 14:12-13) And again He commanded His apostles: *"Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."*

And following Jesus command, we have in the Acts of the Apostles Peter raising Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:40), and later Paul raising Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:12). And after the Apostles we have the Saints continuing the mission and the mandate of Jesus to *"Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons"* and to *"evangelise unto the ends of the earth."* In the book, *"Saints who raised the dead"* there are dozens of Saints listed along with an explanation of the resurrection miracles that they performed. Some of the many listed are St Ignatius of Loyola, ST Paul of the Cross, St Catherine of Siena, St Hyacinth, St Martin of Tours, St Ambrose and many others. But probably one of the greatest evangeliser and missionary Saints was St Francis Xavier. The focus of this article will be the many persons that St Francis brought back to life through the grace of God.



St Francis Xavier -The

Missionary Miracle Worker

In light of his extensive evangelizing, missionary travels and hardships, the great Jesuit missionary St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) is considered to be one of the greatest missionaries since St. Paul. He is known as the "Apostle of the Indies," and the "Apostle of Japan" for in about ten short years (1541-1552) Francis did the work of many individual missionaries, spreading the Catholic Faith from Goa (Portuguese territory in western India), over South India, Ceylon, Bengal, Cape Comorin, the Moluccas, Spice Islands, Malacca, and through the China Sea to Japan where he died-alone except for one companion, a Chinese youth named Antiry, on the Japanese island of Sancian, waiting for a ship to China. On his journeys St. Francis Xavier converted hundreds of thousands, and the impact of his work lasted for centuries.

Those exotic lands were vastly different from the Basque country of his native northern Spain and the Xavier Castle on the fertile mountain slope overlooking the Aragon River. There in the Kingdom of Navarre, Francis Xavier had been born in 1506, the youngest of the six children of the Chancellor of Navarre, Don Juan de Jassu (a doctor of law), and the very beautiful Donna Maria Azpilcueta y Xavier.

Francis Xavier was a brilliant and attractive personality. As a student and lecturer at the great University of Paris, he came under the influence of St. Ignatius Loyola. Francis was among the first seven to take their vows in the fledgling Society of Jesus founded by St. Ignatius; he was later the last to make the famed Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. If Francis had remained in Europe and the universities he might have become famous as

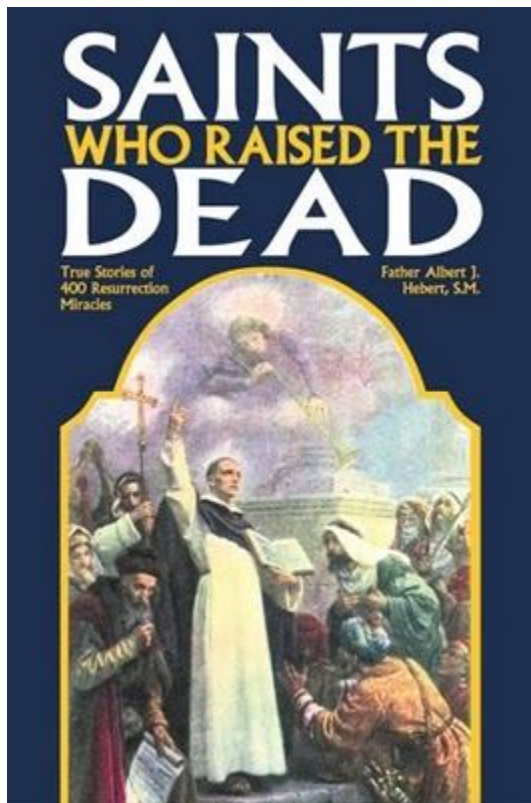
a great teacher or doctor of the Church, judging by the promise of his already brilliant accomplishments.

At that time it came about that King John III of Portugal asked the Pope to send six members of the new society to do mission work in Asia. He wanted them to leave in the royal galleon of the Governor of Portuguese India in April, 1541. Ignatius could spare only two Jesuits, and one of them, Bobadilla, became seriously ill with a severe fever at the last minute. It was apparently with dismay on the part of both Ignatius and Francis that the latter became the substitute.

Then and there the history of the Church and its missions was changed by the workings of Divine Providence. So often it seems that there is a "sacrifice of brilliant talents"; the ability to teach metaphysics in university classes and the meticulously acquired knowledge of Greek and Latin give way to the simplest form of catechism, as a missionary instructs the children, pagans, and cast-offs of many distant places, returning again to language study as he struggles with the idioms of foreign dialects. But God knows what He is about.

Due to inclement weather it took the packed galleon of 900 passengers 13 months to complete its voyage. It arrived at Goa in May, the month of Mary, 1542. There St. Francis Xavier spent five months before traveling on to Cape Com-orin. In Goa he preached, cared for the sick and for prisoners, taught children, and endeavored to bring Christian morality to the Portuguese there, particularly denouncing the concubinage which was so prevalent among them.

Besides his numerous cures, there were many other wonders in St. Francis' life: gifts of tongues, predictions, bilocation, calming a storm at sea, and more. Francis had been "all things to all men"; he was known and loved (and sometimes hated) by great and small in all walks of life. Perhaps the greatest wonder of all is the fact that he baptized 100,000 with his own hand. That remarkable right arm is still preserved and venerated.



Along with the miracles of raising the dead, Butler speaks of four such events which occurred in one period alone, according to the canonization process. Those four resurrections were those of a catechist bitten by a venomous snake, a child drowned in a pit, and a young man and a young girl dead of pestilential fever.

On the Fishery Coast, St. Francis Xavier worked enough miracles to fill a large volume. Once when he was about to begin Mass in a small church at Combutur, a crowd entered with the corpse of a boy who had been drowned in a well. His mother threw herself at the feet of St. Francis—who was also the one who had baptized this child. She implored him to restore the boy to life. Francis said a short prayer, took the dead child by the hand, and bade him arise. The child rose and immediately ran to his mother.

There was a pair of youths who accompanied Francis as catechists. During the night one of them was bitten in the foot by a "cobra da capello." In the morning the youth was found dead. Francis took some saliva from his own mouth, touched the foot of the poisoned catechist, made the Sign of the Cross over him, took him by the hand and bade him arise in the Name of Jesus Christ. The youth responded immediately and was able to continue the missionary journey at once. It was as simple as if he had just gotten up from sleep, instead of having been restored to life itself.

Several chroniclers attribute to St. Francis other resurrections of the dead in that part of the country. Only the Lord knows how many Francis actually recalled from the dead in all his missionary life, laboring night and day. Large numbers could be expected when one recalls that he was

the greatest missionary since St. Paul, and if one considers how many of the dead have been raised by other great missionaries.

Further, it is stated in the processes concerning Francis that one of the children he often sent among the sick in his name raised two dead persons to life. The Christian "children" of St. Francis worked many prodigies. One is re-minded of the helpers St. Vincent Ferrer commissioned to continue working miracles for the multitudes during the times when the saint himself was exhausted.

The following miracle of St. Francis Xavier is recorded in the Relatio documented in the time of Pope Paul V. In the streets of Mutan, Francis met a funeral procession bearing the body of a youth who had died of a malignant fever. According to the custom of that area, the body had been kept for 24 hours wrapped in a shroud. Like Jesus with the widow of Naim, Francis pitied the bereaved parents; they pleaded with him.

The saint knelt down, raised his eyes to Heaven, and prayed to God for the lad's life. Then he sprinkled the covered corpse with holy water and ordered the funeral shroud cut open. When the body was visible, Francis made the Sign of the Cross over it, took the youth by the hand, and bade him in the Name of Jesus to live.

The youth rose up alive, and Francis gave him to his parents in good health. The crowd marveled and praised the holiness of Francis. The youth's parents and friends, in gratitude and memory of the deed, erected a great cross on the spot and held a festival there.

At another time, St. Francis was preaching at Coulon, near Cape Comorin in Travancore at the southern tip of India opposite Ceylon (Sri Lanka). This was a seaport, a rough town where many Christians dishonored their name. Francis, while preaching in the Portuguese church there, felt baffled and stymied by the wall of obstinacy he met in his hardhearted listeners.

Now it happened that a man had been buried in the church the day before. St. Francis stopped preaching; he prayed to God to honor the Blood and the Name of His Son and to soften the hearts of the congregation. Then he directed a few men to open the nearby grave of the man who had been buried the day before. He had prayed in tears, and now he accompanied his directions with the burning words of holy eloquence. He told the congregation how God was pleased even to raise the dead in order to convert them.

When they opened the tomb and brought out the body, it was already giving off a stench. On Francis' orders they tore apart the shroud to find the body already beginning to putrefy. Francis expressed his desire that they should all take note of these facts. (They could hardly escape them!) Then the saint fell on his knees, made a short prayer, and commanded

the dead man, in the Name of the Living God, to arise. The man arose-alive, vigorous and in perfect health! The onlookers were filled with awe. Those who needed it fell at the saint's feet to be baptized, and a large number of people were converted because of this miracle.

The two miracles above were accepted by the auditors of the Rota as resting on incontrovertible evidence from two witnesses, Emanuel Gaga and Joam Audicondam, as well as from one "dead" person himself. These great miracles led almost the entire kingdom--except for the king and a few of his courtiers--to become Christians within a few months. And as Father Coleridge points out in his two-volume life of St. Francis Xavier, "We must take these miracles as but specimens."



Why would God grant anyone the power to perform such great miracles? This becomes easier to understand when one appreciates the immense number of souls converted by St. Francis Xavier. Within about a year he had established up to 45 Christian communities in the area. It is hard to conceive of such mass conversions, whether by Francis Xavier or by any missionary apostle, without great and numerous wonders to testify to the truth of the apostle's words. Our Lord used His own miracles as signs that testified to His Messiahship and Kingdom. His wonders proved that He was, indeed, the Son of God sent by the Father. He ordered His disciples to work similar miracles with generosity, and promised that they would work even greater wonders than He had.

Man is inclined to measure miracles by his own limited standards and abilities. But for God, of course, the "great" and the "small" miracle are

equally easy. Yet it somehow seems more wonderful when (as with Lazarus) someone who has been dead for days is raised, rather than one who has very recently died. But death is death-whether it has lasted a minute or a week-and the wonder of restoration is equally marvelous in either case.

At Malacca St. Francis Xavier worked a miracle for someone who had been buried for several days. When Francis was away from the town, the daughter of a recently baptized woman died. The mother had sought Francis everywhere while the girl was still ill. When this earnest parent learned that Francis had returned, she was full of the simple faith that Francis, whom she was convinced could have healed her daughter-as he had cured people en masse-could just as easily raise the girl from the dead. As Martha said to Jesus, "But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." (John 11 :22).

When the mother found St. Francis she threw herself at his feet, and like Martha and Mary, exclaimed that if he had been there her daughter would not have died; nonetheless, nothing was difficult for God, and she knew that Francis, with his prayers, could return her to life. As Jesus had marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion and the Syrophenician woman, St. Francis Xavier marveled at the faith and confidence of this recent convert.

Since the mother seemed so worthy of such a favor, Francis prayed for God to grant her this consolation. Then he turned to the mother and told her to go to the grave; her daughter was alive. Hopeful, fearful, not disbelieving, but because Francis had not offered to come himself to the tomb, she answered simply that the girl had been three days buried. But St. Francis had measured her testing tolerance.

She questioned St. Francis no further; with shining faith she ran rejoicing to the church where her daughter had been buried. At the burial place the mother, together with many other witnesses who had hurried there with her, had the stone raised from the grave. The dead daughter, buried three days, came out alive! As with the raising of Lazarus, no one could doubt the verity of such a miracle.

One must admire the tenacious faith of this newly converted woman. Such strong faith is seldom found. The great faith and wisdom of the apostle met and matched the faith of the mother, when he asked her to go to the tomb alone.

This power of raising the dead from a distance seems to have been a special charism of St. Francis Xavier. In Japan, at or near Cagoxima, a pagan nobleman lost his only daughter. He was greatly grieved. Some recent Christian converts, sympathizing with him, recommended that he

seek help from the God of the Christians and the prayers of the "great teacher of the Portuguese." The father went to St. Francis and cast himself at his feet. He was so choked with emotion he could not speak. But the saint understood.



St. Francis went into the little oratory where he offered Mass. His helper, Joam Fernandez, went along with him. After Francis prayed for a few moments he came out and told the anxious father to go, that his prayers were heard. That was all Francis said, so the nobleman turned homeward, hurt and grieved.

But on his way a servant met him and joyfully told him that his daughter was alive. Next, the girl herself came running and threw herself upon her father's neck. She informed her father that when she had breathed her last breath, immediately two horrible demons had seized her. They were about to hurl her into Hell when two venerable men came to her rescue. The next moment she found herself alive and well. When the girl's father brought her to St. Francis Xavier's house she identified Francis and Fernandez as her two deliverers. Father and daughter were subsequently instructed and baptized.

Another miracle occurred when Francis was on a ship, the Santa Croce, going to San Chan. A Musselman's five-year-old son fell overboard at a time when the ship was running fast before the wind. It was impossible even to attempt to save him. The father had been in despair for three days when he chanced upon Francis on the deck. Francis somehow -for the glory of God? -had not heard of the tragedy. He asked the father if he would believe in Jesus Christ if his child were restored. (A small child, overboard in the sea for three days, miles behind the ship, and Francis confidently asks such a question!) The man said he would believe.

A few hours passed, probably while Francis was praying. Suddenly the Musselman met his child, bright and joyous, running to him on the deck.

The father and his entire family were baptized.

"For, Amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." (Matt. 17:19). The "mountain" may represent the great obstacle of unbelief to be overcome. A mustard seed is very, very small. Suppose one's faith were the size of a watermelon seed ... or a coconut ...?

In Japan at Cagoxima, Francis blessed the swollen body of a deformed child, making it straight and beautiful. And that expresses well the objective of the saints: to make all men straight and beautiful in the eyes of God.

Among his later miracles, Francis raised to life a young pagan woman "of some quality" who had been dead a whole day. At Malacca he restored to life a young man, Francis Ciavos, who later became a Jesuit.

St. Francis Xavier died on December 3, 1552, at the age of 46. Before his burial, the coffin was filled with lime-two sacksfull beneath the body and two over it-in order to hasten decomposition so that at some future time the bones could be easily transported to India. Ten weeks later, when the saint's body was exhumed to be taken to Malacca, it was found to be perfectly incorrupt.

Only 12 years after he had first embarked on his missionary journeys, the body of St. Francis Xavier was brought back to Goa in veritable triumph. Around the saint's body miracles were recorded every day of that autumn and winter. When his remains were temporarily placed in the chapel of the College of St. Paul on March 15, 1554, several blind were cured, as also were paralytics, those with palsy, etc. Francis had been the special envoy of both the Holy See and of King John III of Portugal; on the order of the King a verbal process was made with the utmost accuracy, in Goa and in other parts of India; in it, accounts were taken of many miracles wrought through St. Francis Xavier.

Today the body of St. Francis Xavier is dry and shrunken, but there is still no corruption. Many parts of the body, notably the right arm mentioned above, have been removed and sent to various places as most precious relics. In 1974-75 the body of the saint (in a glass case) was exhibited for viewing and veneration for a six-week period. Today it rests in a silver reliquary in the Basilica of Born Jesu in Goa, India.

-St Francis Xavier, pray for us!



Our Lady of Good Success

(Prophecies for Our Times)

**Prophetic revelations made to Venerable Mother Mariana de Jesus
Torres**

This article is based on excerpts taken from the 18th Century manuscript entitled *The Admirable Life of Mother Mariana of Jesus Torres*, written by Prior Manuel de Souza Pereira, Franciscan Provincial in Quito, Ecuador and director of the Convent Mother Mariana founded. This manuscript was written a century after her death. Mother Mariana is linked mysteriously to our times by the visions Our Lady showed her of the 20th Century over 350 years ago. This apparition has been approved by the Church and Mother Mariana has been declared Venerable in the first step towards her canonization.

On January 16, 1635, surrounded by her community and her Franciscan confessors, Mother Mariana made a solemn profession of Faith, and then asked, as a last favor, to die on the ground, in imitation of her Seraphic Father, St. Francis. After receiving Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, she foretold the exact hour of her death: 3 p.m. Just before she died, she read her last will and testament, a moving testimony that gave her daughters inestimable advice about the religious life along with many prophecies concerning the order. At its end, she turned to the priests: "My fathers and sisters, the time has come for me to depart; recommend my soul to God with the appropriate prayers. I thank you for everything. Always, I beseech you, have this convent and your sisters in your care. I die, as I was born, joyously and peacefully in the arms of my mother, the Seraphic Order." Two tears rolled down her cheek, she sighed, and with an angelic smile, that blessed soul left her body.

After death, her body remained flexible, her complexion rosy, and the charming smile on her face gave her every appearance of being alive. During the wake, the sight of a blind girl was restored when a flower from the crown that encircled Mother Mariana's head was touched to the her eyes.

In 1906, during the remodeling of the Convent, her three-century old tomb was opened. They discovered the body of Mother Mariana de Jesus whole and incorrupt, complete with her habit and the articles of penance that had been placed in the tomb with her. An exquisite aroma of lilies emanated from her whole body. Thus God preserves some of his saints who practice heroic virtue and maintain holy chastity in their earthly lives.

Mother Mariana possessed the gift of discernment of spirits, which Our Dear Lord so often gives to founders of religious orders. Since she could read the hearts of her daughters, she would comfort them, telling them how to progress in the spiritual life and explain how it was necessary to die to oneself in order to practice real virtue. She repeatedly warned them to guard the common life of the Convent and obey the Rule. When prayer and community life are wanting, she said, everything falls short, for the religious without prayer is like a soldier without arms in combat. She told them to be patient in their sicknesses, since illnesses are the best and most meritorious penances, which free souls from illusions, vanity and

pride. She especially warned her daughters to guard against that "cursed human respect, which makes one ask: 'What will others say about this?'" Instead, she counseled that they should guide their lives in the cloisters according to the norms of the Gospel and ground themselves firmly on the strong foundation of humility.

Let us consider some of the revelations that Mother Mariana was blessed to receive from Our Lord and Our Lady.

Instructions and Advice

Our Lady: "Oh, if only human beings and religious knew what Heaven is and what it is to possess God, how differently they would live, sparing no sacrifice in order to enter more fully into possession of it! But some let themselves be dazzled by the false glamour of honors and human greatness while others are blinded by self-love, not realizing that they are falling into lukewarmness, that immense evil which in religious houses destroys their fervor, humility, self-renunciation and the ceaseless practice of religious virtues and fraternal charity and that child-like simplicity which makes souls so dear to my Divine Son and to me, their Mother.

"Remember the words of the Royal Prophet: 'How marvelous are the works of the Lord!' Be convinced of this truth; teach and impress your daughters both living and those to come that they should love their divine vocations. Reveal to them the glorious place that God and I are saving for those who belong to Us, our heirs.

"Woe to the world should it lack monasteries and convents! Men do not comprehend their importance, for, if they understood, they would do all in their power to multiply them, because in them can be found the remedy for all physical and moral evils... No one on the face of the earth is aware whence comes the salvation of souls, the conversion of great sinners, the end of great scourges, the fertility of the land, the end of pestilence and wars, and the harmony between nations. All this is due to the prayers that rise up from monasteries and convents.

"O, if mortals only understood how to appreciate the time given to them, and would take advantage of each moment of their lives, how different the world would be! And a considerable number of souls would not fall to their eternal perdition! But this contempt is the fundamental cause for their downfall!"

Our Lady emphasized the importance of the Sacrament of Penance and the important role of priests: "See and contemplate the grandeur of this restoring and life-giving Sacrament of Penance, so forgotten and even scorned by ungrateful men, who in their foolish madness, do not realize that it is the only sure means of salvation after one has lost his baptismal

innocence. What is most grievous is that even the ministers of My Most Holy Son do not give to it the value that they should, viewing with cold indifference this valuable and precious treasure, which has been placed in their hands for the restoration of souls redeemed by the Blood of the Redeemer. There are those who consider hearing confession as a loss of time and a futile thing. O, alas! If priests were given to see directly that which you are now contemplating and were enlightened with the Light that now illuminates you, they would then recognize this gift!..."

Our Lord: "For in all times I have need of valiant souls to save My Church and the prevaricating world." Our Lord also made Mother Mariana understand more clearly than ever before that devotion to the Passion, to the Blessed Sacrament and to Our Lady constitutes the support and mainstay of religious communities.

"Know, moreover, that Divine Justice releases terrible chastisements on entire nations, not only for the sins of the people, but for those of priests and religious persons. For the latter are called, by the perfection of their state, to be the salt of the earth, the masters of truth, and the deflectors of Divine Wrath. Straying from their divine mission, they degrade themselves in such a way that, before the eyes of God they quicken the rigor of the punishments..." (During the 41 years of St. John Vianney's ministry at Ars, France, no damage was ever done by storms.)

He also assured Mother Mariana that He was greatly pleased by those souls who take upon themselves the sublime task of suffering for the sanctification of the Clergy by means of their prayers, sacrifices and penances, and promised such souls a special glory in Heaven.

The ingratitude and betrayal of religious souls, so dear to His Heart, would compel Him "to let My Justice fall upon My beloved cloisters – and even over cities – when those so near to Me who belong to Me reject My spirit, abandoning Me alone in Tabernacles, rarely remembering that I live there especially for love of them, even more than for the rest of the faithful." Imprudent admissions and internal abuses permitted by superiors are the ruin of communities. "Such communities can only be preserved – while they exist – at the cost of much penance, humiliations and daily and solid practice of the religious who are good. Woe to these corrupt members during those times of calamity! Weep for them, beloved spouse, and implore that the time of so much suffering will be shortened." He warned her that the Chastisement would be severe for those religious who squandered the many graces with their pride and vainglory to secure positions of power and rank and He especially condemned the lukewarm religious.

Mother Mariana saw that the greatest interior torments of the Sacred Heart were the ingratitude and indifference of those souls who, chosen among millions to be His spouses and ministers, left Him in the most

absolute solitude. And this despite the fact that in the Holy Sacrament, He would live under the same roof with His spouses and come into the hand of His priests at the simple call of their voices at the most solemn moment of the Consecration.

Prophecies

Our Lady prophesied that at the end of the 19th Century and especially in the 20th Century that Satan would reign almost completely by the means of the Masonic sect. The Queen of Heaven told Mother Mariana that this battle would reach its most acute stage because of various unfaithful religious, who, "under the appearance of virtue and bad-spirited zeal, would turn upon Religion, who nourished them at her breast." "During this time," she continued, "insomuch as this poor country will lack the Christian spirit, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction will be little esteemed. Many people will die without receiving it – either because of the negligence of their families or their false sentimentality that tries to protect the sick from seeing the gravity of their situations, or because they will rebel against the spirit of the Catholic Church, impelled by the malice of the devil. Thus many souls will be deprived of innumerable graces, consolations and the strength they need to make that great leap from time to eternity..." "As for the Sacrament of Matrimony, which symbolizes the union of Christ with His Church, it will be attacked and profaned in the fullest sense of the word. Masonry, which will then be in power, will enact iniquitous laws with the objective of doing away with this Sacrament, making it easy for everyone to live in sin, encouraging the procreation of illegitimate children born without the blessing of the Church. The Christian spirit will rapidly decay, extinguishing the precious light of Faith until it reaches the point that there will be an almost total and general corruption of customs. The effects of secular education will increase, which will be one reason for the lack of priestly and religious vocations..."

"The Sacred Sacrament of Holy Orders will be ridiculed, oppressed and despised. ...The demon will try to persecute the Ministers of the Lord in every possible way and he will labor with cruel and subtle astuteness to deviate them from the spirit of their vocation, corrupting many of them. These corrupted priests, who will scandalize the Christian people, will incite the hatred of the bad Christians and the enemies of the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church to fall upon all priests. This apparent triumph of Satan will bring enormous sufferings to the good Pastors of the Church...."

"Moreover, in these unhappy times, there will be unbridled luxury which, acting thus to snare the rest into sin, will conquer innumerable frivolous souls who will be lost. Innocence will almost no longer be found in children, nor modesty in women. In this supreme moment of need of the Church, those who should speak will fall silent."

"But know, beloved daughter, that when your name is made known in the 20th century, there will be many who will not believe, claiming that this devotion is not pleasing to God...A simple humble faith in the truth of My apparitions to you, My predilect child, will be reserved for humble and fervent souls docile to the inspirations of grace, for Our Heavenly Father communicates His secrets to the simple of heart, and not to those whose hearts are inflated with pride, pretending to know what they do not, or self-satisfied with empty knowledge."

During this time, Our Lady foretold, "the secular Clergy will leave much to be desired because priests will become careless in their sacred duties. Lacking the divine compass, they will stray from the road traced by God for the priestly ministry, and they will become attached to wealth and riches, which they will unduly strive to obtain. How the Church will suffer during this dark night! Lacking a Prelate and Father to guide them with paternal love, gentleness, strength, wisdom and prudence, many priests will lose their spirit, placing their souls in great danger. This will mark the arrival of My hour."

"Therefore, clamor insistently without tiring and weep with bitter tears in the privacy of your heart, imploring our Celestial Father that, for love of the Eucharistic Heart of my Most Holy Son and His Precious Blood shed with such generosity and the profound bitterness and sufferings of His cruel Passion and Death, He might take pity on His ministers and bring to an end those Ominous times, sending to this Church the Prelate who will restore the spirit of its priests."

On December 8, 1634, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, three archangels and their Queen appeared to Mother Mariana. St. Gabriel was carrying a Ciborium filled with Hosts which Our Lady explained: "This signifies the Most August Sacrament of the Eucharist, which will be distributed by my Catholic priests to faithful Christians belonging to the Holy Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church, whose visible head is the Pope, the King of Christianity. His pontifical infallibility will be declared a dogma of the Faith by the same Pope chosen to proclaim the dogma of the Mystery of My Immaculate Conception. He will be persecuted and imprisoned in the Vatican by the unjust usurpation of the Pontifical States through the iniquity, envy and avarice of an earthly monarch." This holy Pope was Blessed Pius IX, who fulfilled every prediction made by Our Lady. His body, being exhumed for beatification in 2000, was found miraculously preserved in the tomb where it had lain for more than a century. His face still showed a striking serenity in death.

Another most interesting prophecy of Our Lady: "In the 19th Century there will be a truly Catholic president, a man of character whom God Our Lord will give the palm of martyrdom on the square adjoining this Convent. He will consecrate the Republic to the Sacred Heart of My Most Holy Son, and this consecration will sustain the Catholic Religion in the

years that will follow, which will be ill-fated ones for the Church. These years, during which the evil sect of Masonry will take control of the civil government – will see a cruel persecution of all religious communities, and they will also strike out violently against this one of mine."

The "truly Catholic" president of Ecuador, Gabriel Garcia Moreno (1821-1875), consecrated the republic to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1873. Pope Pius IX paid him tribute as a man who had died "the death of a martyr...a victim to his Faith and Christian charity." Gabriel Moreno's incorrupt heart and the famous painting of Our Lady of Quito can be seen in the Cathedral of Quito.

Conclusion

We are living in a time of the great crisis of Faith and morals as prophesied by Our Lady. The confusion is of such magnitude that it is not only subverting the temporal sphere, but also penetrates the walls of the Church itself. Indeed, as Our Lady prophesied, the corruption of customs has become general and the precious light of Faith almost extinct. Yet the message of Our Lady of Good Success ends with a note of great hope: When everything will seem lost and paralyzed, that will be "the happy beginning of the complete restoration. This will mark the arrival of my hour, when I, in a marvelous way, will dethrone the proud and cursed Satan, trampling him under my feet and fettering him in the infernal abyss." It is the promise echoed by Our Lady again at Fatima in 1917: "In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph."

Thus it seems opportune to turn to Our Lady of Good Success and invoke Her, begging for every good success – both temporal and spiritual. It is the moment to ask for her orientation and certainty amid this storm, and the courage and strength to keep aloft the standard of the Faith.

Finally, let us pray that Our Lady will intervene quickly to restore the Church and society, so that she may reassume her throne and reign again in glory as Queen of all the earth.

Our Lady of Good Success

Our Lady of Good Success, also called as Our Lady of Good Events (Spanish: Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso; Filipino: Ina ng Mabubuting Pangyayari) is one of the titles of Blessed Virgin Mary. This title is shared among numerous images around the world — a number of images in

Spain, one in Quito, Ecuador, and one in Parañaque, Philippines. It is claimed that Quito's image had produced an apparition - to Mother Mariana de Jesús Torres.

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[edit] History

[edit] Spain



Our Lady of Good Success in Madrid, Spain

Two Spanish friars, Brothers Gabriel de Fontaned and Guillermo de Rigosa traveled to Rome to meet the Pope for the approval of their order (The

Order of Minims for the Service of the Sick or The Order of Saint Francis of Paola).^[1] As they were passing through the town of Traigueras (under the jurisdiction of Tortosa in the Principate of Cataluña), a furious storm descended upon them. The brothers prayed for God's guidance and help. Immediately they saw a mysterious light coming from a cave in a cliff. Climbing up, they entered and found a beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Baby Jesus in her arms. They reported being surrounded by shimmering lights and fragrant scents. As no one claimed the statue, the two carried it with them, hoping that the Blessed Mother would help in getting approval for their order.

On arriving in Rome, the brothers were worried that they might not obtain papal consent. However, Pope Paul V on hearing the story of their journey, knelt before the statue and placed his pectoral cross around the its neck. As he embraced and kissed the statue, he said:

“ “Look Brothers! She is smiling! Why does she smile so? What good success you have had on this journey! There is no doubt that Our Lady has deigned to protect and support you in your work. Therefore it will not be me that will go against Her. May all of your efforts obtain good success!”^[2] ”

He then blessed it and christened her Our Lady of Good Success. The image was placed in the Royal Hospital of Madrid. Here, the image became famous "for the numerous favors granted by Heaven through her".^[1] In 1641??, Philip III ordered the construction of the Sanctuary of the Puerta del Sol. This enshrines the image renowned among the churches of Madrid. Soon, as its popularity and devotion spread, the image is replicated and placed in different places in Spain: Orduña, La Puebla de Gordon, Tudela, Abla, and among others.^[3]

[edit] Quito, Ecuador



 Our Lady of Good Success in Quito, Ecuador

Five religious sisters traveled from Spain to Quito, Ecuador to start the first convent. Mariana de Jesús Torres, one of the young nuns, saw the Blessed Mother herself. She asked her if she would be willing to offer her life for the sins of the Twentieth century. She was also given the choice to stay in heaven or earth. Mariana decided to stay.

On February 2, 1610, as Mariana was praying to the Blessed Mother, she appeared to her and stated:


“I am Mary of Good Success, whom you have invoked with such tender affection. Your prayer has pleased me very much. Your faith has brought me here. Your love has invited me to visit you.....”^[citation needed]

Mary told Mother Mariana some prophecies which will happen in the Twentieth Century, particularly about the corruption, oppression and unavailability of the sacraments and also crisis in the clergy.

Our Lady of Good Success commanded a statue to be made to her likeness stating:

“...now I ask and command you to have a statue to be made for the consolation and preservation of my convent and for those faithful souls of that epoch during which there will be a great devotion to me, for I am the Queen of Heaven under many invocations...With the making of this statue I will favor not only my convent, but also the people of Quito—and all the people throughout the centuries.”
[4]



 Mother Mariana, The Lily of Quito

Our Lady of Good Success also told Mother Mariana that this statue was to be made, for these reasons:

“First so that men in the future might realize how powerful I am in placating Divine Justice and obtaining mercy and pardon for every sinner who comes to me with a contrite heart. For I am the Mother of Mercy and in me there is only goodness and love.”

“And second ...when tribulations of spirit and sufferings of the body oppress them and they seem to be drowning in this bottomless sea let them gaze at my holy image and I will always be there ready to listen to their cries and soothe their pain. Tell them that they should always run to their Mother with confidence and love...” ^[5]

Over the course of ten years Mother Mariana struggled with the issue of completing the statue. Many obstacles prevented its sculpting. One obstacle was a fear of idolatry on the part of the native people in Quito. Another was Mother Mariana’s personal fear of not being believed and thus putting the convent in jeopardy. There was already an upheaval in the convent caused by an unfaithful and rebellious sister who incited other sisters against Mother Mariana and the sisters who were faithful to the rules of their order. This sister was known as “La Capitana” (the Captain). Mother Mariana was mystically informed of the horrible state of this sister's soul. She desired to save her from eternal damnation; however, the only solution given to Mother Mariana was that she, herself, would have to take on the sufferings and punishments of hell that this sister would have to endure in hell had Mother Mariana not interceded for her. This she was to bear for five long years. Mother Mariana agreed to this sentence. She was the picture of virtue during this time and no one but her confessor knew of the tormented life she led at this time. As a result of Mother Mariana’s years of suffering “La Capitana” finally

repented. For the remainder of her life she did penance for the sins she had committed.

In the year 1610, she asked the permission of the Bishop to create the statue. He agreed for he'd dreamt that his life depended on it. The sculpting of the statue of Our Lady of Good Success was given to Francisco del Castillo. Castillo was chosen as he was a talented sculptor and a devotee of the Blessed Mother. As he was adding the finishing touches, Castillo went out to purchase some paints for the faces of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus.

[edit] Miraculous completion of the statue



Our Lady of Good Success completed the statue together with the archangels and St. Francis of Assisi

While Castillo was away, Mother Mariana and the other sisters went to the choir loft to beseech Our Lady to keep her promise. Afterwards, Mother Mariana was alone praying in the choir loft. Suddenly, Our Lady of Good Success appeared with the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael along with St. Francis of Assisi. The archangels bowed down to Mary and sang a prayer:

"Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy Daughter of God the Father" (St. Michael)

"Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy Mother of God the Son" (St. Gabriel)

"Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy, Most Pure Spouse of the Holy Ghost" (St. Raphael)

"Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy Temple and Sacrament of the Most Holy Trinity" (All three Archangels) ^[6]

With this, the statue of Our Lady was completed. The statue became animated as Mary walked into the statue itself. Our Lady of Good Success began to sing the "Magnificat". This occurred on the morning of January 16, 1611 at 3:00 AM. A choir of heavenly spirits began to sing "Salve Sancta Parens" which awakened the rest of the convent. The sisters rushed to the choir loft and found the statue transformed and surrounded by a heavenly light.

The statue of Our Lady of Good Success was blessed on February 2, 1611. On that day, she was placed above the seat of the Abbess chair at her own specific request as a sign to all that she was the one who governed and watched over the convent. Her official title being that of "Mary of Good Success of the Purification".

[edit] Burning out of Sanctuary Light



Our Lady of Good Success appeared to Mother Mariana

On February 2, 1634, 23 years after the first apparition, Our Lady of Good Success appeared again to Mother Mariana. As Mother Mariana was praying in the upper choir loft before the Blessed Sacrament, the Sanctuary lamp went out. Mother Mariana was left in complete darkness. This apparition concerned terrible things that would happen during these latter times.

Our Lady of Good Success told Mother Mariana that a time of great evil would fall upon the Catholic Church. The general theme concerned a lax and perverse clergy. Many members of the Catholic clergy would "become as thieves", stealing the tabernacle light of Faith, which belongs to every Catholic by virtue of their baptism in the Church. Furthermore, she was told, they would rob Catholics of: Doctrine, Dogma and Tradition.

Ransacking the Church as it were and leaving Catholics in darkness, without even the light from the Sanctuary lamp. Our Lady of Good Success explained in detail that there were five reasons for this extinguishing of the light:

- The first reason was that towards the end of the 19th Century and through the 20th Century, heresies would prevail - not only in Ecuador but universally: "As these heresies spread out and become dominant, the precious light of Faith will be extinguished in souls by the almost total corruption of customs." [7]
- The second reason was that in the days to come the Conceptionist community itself would shrink and become infected with bad attitudes and false charity as a result of the pervading situation in the Church. Many vocations would be lost as a direct result: "The faithful souls will suffer a continuous and slow martyrdom - weeping in secret and imploring that those dire times be shortened." [8]
- The third reason the lamp failed was because during the prophesied century, the 20th, a worldwide campaign against the virtues of chastity, and purity would succeed in corrupting the youth. Our Lady of Good Success stated, "There will be few virgin souls left in the world" [9]
- The fourth reason the lamp was put out was to demonstrate how the Masons and other secret sects would have so much influence on society and even within the Church. "During these unfortunate times," she foretold, "evil will invade childhood innocence. In this way, vocations to the priesthood will be lost, resulting in a true calamity." Our Lady of Good Success foresaw that there would still be some good, faithful religious who would be willing to suffer for the salvation of souls and life of the Holy Catholic Church. However, "The clergy will leave much to be desired because priests will become careless in their sacred duties. Lacking the divine compass, they will stray from the road traced by God for the priestly ministry, and they will become attached to wealth and riches, which they will unduly strive to attain. How the Church will suffer during this dark night! Lacking a prelate and a father to guide them, many priests will lose their spirit, placing their souls in great danger." [9]
Our Lady affirmed that the remaining faithful priests upholding the Faith in the times ahead would suffer greatly. "Against them the impious will wage a cruel war, overwhelming them with vituperations, calumnies and vexations in order to stop them from fulfilling their ministry. But they, like firm columns, will remain unswerving and will confront everything with a spirit of humility and sacrifice with which they will be vested, by virtue of the infinite merits of my most Holy Son, Who will love them in the innermost fibers of His Most Holy and Tender Heart. Our Lady of Good Success

implored that the people of this time should “clamor insistently” to the Heavenly Father for an end to ‘these ominous times’ sending to the Church a prelate and father who would restore the spirit to the priests”.^[9]

- The fifth reason for lamp going out is the uncharitability of those who have the financial means to help the Church but who do nothing. Their miserly attitude toward God and His Church will allow evil to seemingly triumph.

After seeing the visions, Mother Mariana fainted and remained unconscious. The doctor declared that her death was imminent but she woke up within a few days and regained her health.

[edit] Parañaque, Philippines



Our Lady of Good Success in Parañaque, Philippines
Newly restored image

The history of Our Lady of Good Success in Parañaque was based on the writings of Father Nicolas de San Pedro, OSA, the vicar of St. Andrew's Parish (today Cathedral Parish of St. Andrew).

The Augustinian fathers brought the image from Spain as a gift from the King to the Filipinos converts. The Augustinians stayed in Palanyag (Parañaque) and built St. Andrew's Parish in 1580, the same year the image was delivered. Her image was left untouched and covered with dust. Catig, a poor native from Don Galo, saw this and asked the sacristan if he could take the statue home. This was granted and Catig took the statue to his house, lighting votive candles to honor the Virgin.

As Catig lay dying on his bed, his neighbors called Fr. Juan de Guevarra to deliver last rites. Upon blessing Catig, Fr. Guevarra saw the statue standing near the bed. He asked Catig for her in exchange of PHP 24 (Note that peso was costly during the Spanish era in the Philippines.) At first, Catig refused but then changed his mind knowing that she should be revered by the people. Father Guevarra took the statue and placed it in his room after Catig had died.^[10]

In the room, according to Fr. Guevarra, a miracle happened: a mysterious light emanated from her image, and he heard glorious hymns. Fr. Guevarra concluded that the image was miraculous.^[11]

[edit] Enthronement to the altar

Father Guevarra reported the miracle immediately to the superior of the Augustinians, Father Alonzo de Mentrída. Upon hearing the words of the friar, he ordered that the icon be transported to St. Andrew's Church. On August 10, 1625, a great procession was held, and the image was mounted over the altar.^[11]

The people of Palanyag assembled and voted to give the icon a name. Each suggested a title on a piece of paper and dropped it into a box held by an eight-year-old boy. The title "Our Lady of Good Events" (Buen Suceso) was chosen by six people and the image thus obtained its name.^[12]

Archbishop Miguel Garcia Serrano and some of the officials of Manila joined to venerate the Lady's image. It was said that Archbishop Serrano is the first one to create the novena and reconstructed the altar. After the reconstruction, another feast was celebrated on February 22, 1626. Many went to the celebration, not only the ones who live in Parañaque, but also the neighboring provinces.

[edit] Canonical coronation

The image of Our Lady of Good Success was canonically crowned as "The Patroness of the City of Parañaque" on September 8, 2000, the same day as the feast of the Virgin Mary's birth. Many joined in the celebration: parishioners, local government officials, and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, before she became president. After the Lady was crowned, people shouted, "Viva la Virgen!" (Long live the Virgin!) After the mass, a procession was held with the statue of Our Lady.^[13] Our Lady of Good Success serves as the patroness of the Diocese of Parañaque; followed by St. Andrew the Apostle, the patron of the Cathedral.

[edit] Feast

In Ecuador and Spain, her feast day is celebrated on February 2, the day Our Lady of Good Success appeared to Mother Mariana along with the archangels and St. Francis of Assisi (thus coinciding with the Feast of the Purification). In Parañaque, the feast day was on August 10, the day when the our lady was enthroned.

[edit] Solemn Procession

Highlight of the procession will be the singing of the "Gozos dela Virgen del Buen Suceso" by the luna hermosa, who will serenade the Virgen from a balcony along the route of the procession.

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[edit] Notes

1. ^ a b Urrate, José (2003). Introduction to the Novena to Our Lady of Good Success. Trans. Horvat, Marian Theresa.
2. ^ Montes, Carlos. La Sonrisa de la Señora - Historia de la Virgen del Buen Suceso.
3. ^ Horvat, Marian Theresa. Our Lady of Good Success - Quito, Ecuador
4. ^ Our Lady of Good Success –Prophecies for Our Times, 1st Edition, pg. 44
5. ^ Stories and Miracles of Our Lady of Good Success, pg. 25
6. ^ Stories and Miracles of Our Lady of Good Success, pg. 55

7. ^ Our Lady of Good Success –Prophecies for Our Times,1st Edition, pg. 50
8. ^ Our Lady of Good Success – Prophecies for Our Times, 1st Edition, pg. 51
9. ^ ^{a b c} Our Lady of Good Success –Prophecies for Our Times, 1st Edition, pg. 52
10. ^ Nobena sa Karangalan ng Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso, October 7, 1996, pg. 5-6
11. ^ ^{a b} Nobena sa Karangalan ng Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso, October 7, 1996, pg. 6
12. ^ Nobena sa Karangalan ng Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso, October 7, 1996, pg. 7
13. ^ The Canonical Coronation of Nuestra Señora del Buen Suceso.